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# History of the Latino Experience in the Morris Area

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**History of the Latino Experience in the Morris Area**

**Principal Investigators: Stacey Parker Aronson and Windy González Roberts**

**Student Assistants: Cristina Montañez and Jordan Wente**

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**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this study is to document the history of the Latino experience in the Morris area in the last ten years. We also wish to identify best practices in community building and intercultural awareness.

**BACKGROUND:** The Center for Small Towns in conjunction with the Humphrey Institute compiled demographic data concerning the growing Latino population in Stevens' county and the surrounding counties of Big Stone, Douglas, Grant, Pope, Swift and Traverse. This data comes from census records and school enrollment records gathered for the past 10 years between 2000 and 2010.

According to Department of Labor census records, the Latino population has increased in the past 10 years by over 274.44% from 90 people to 337 in Stevens' county and by over 71.43% from 763 to 1308 people in the surrounding seven county area. The counties of Stevens and Swift have the highest percentage of Latinos per population in 2010, and Stevens and Grant had the largest increase in the percentage of Latinos from 2000 to 2010.

According to school enrollment records, the population of Latino students enrolled in elementary through senior high school in the counties of Big Stone, Douglas, Grant, Pope, Stevens, Swift and Traverse has increased in the past 10 years from 10.89% to 13.33%.

An increase of this size in the Latino population has a noticeable and significant effect on the communities.

(1) In the course of our study, we hope to be able to answer some of the following questions regarding our Latino community members: Where do they come from? Why do they come? Where do they work? Do they come with their families? How long do they stay? Do their children attend school? Do they attend church?

(2) We are also interested in documenting what has been done to accommodate them in the Morris area. The following activities have arisen due to demand and to the beneficence of local community members to meet a perceived community need:

- Service Learning at UMM
- ESL at Morris area schools
- ESL at UMM
- La Tienda Latino grocery store
- Spanish Language Film Festival (2008-2012)
- Lazos Intercommunity Organization
- UMM student organizations Voces Unidas and Vamos Juntos
- Soccer League
- Spanish language mass at Assumption Catholic Church
- Spanish language services at Morris Evangelical Free Church

(3) We are also interested in getting feedback about what still needs to be done.

SPONSOR: Center for Small Towns

PARTICIPANTS: Our volunteer participants will come from two groups. (1) One set of participants will consist of volunteers from the Morris area community who have been involved with developmental projects affecting the Latino community. We will gather personal histories from these stakeholders detailing their involvement or relationships with the Latino community. These histories will be gathered via personal interviews or via written (or recorded) histories. (2) Another set of volunteer participants will consist of local members of the Latino community organized into several focus groups.

METHODS: This study will be primarily a qualitative one. The goal is to produce an overall portrait of the experience for Latinos in the Morris area. It is our intention that no vulnerable members of the community, such as children, participate. We will send a letter of invitation to identified community stakeholders (movers and shakers) and ask them to participate. For the focus groups we will create a poster inviting their participation.

STUDENT ASSISTANTS: We will enlist the aid of two qualified UMM students—Cristina Montañez and Jordan Wentz—to recruit and facilitate the focus groups. Focus group meetings may be held at the Morris Public Library. Their responsibilities will include the following activities:

- help us determine the most effective means to communicate with the target populations;
- help us fill out the IRB proposal form;
- create advertising to recruit focus group members;
- recruit between three and five focus groups of three to eight participants each focus group;
- assist in the drafting of the focus group survey questions;
- create privacy and consent forms for focus group participants;
- facilitate focus groups (between ½ hour to 2 hours per focus group X 10 hours per student = 20 hours);
- transcribe the proceedings of the focus groups;
- translate the proceedings of the focus groups from Spanish to English;
- other relevant activities as determined by investigators (Windy Roberts, Stacey Parker Aronson).

We estimate a minimum of 75 hours of compensation required for the two students. We would like to complete as much of this work as possible before the end of the spring semester of 2012.

**ORAL HISTORIES:** We selected a series of people we perceived to be local stakeholders and sent them following letter of introduction:

Date: September 20, 2011

To: Name included here

From: Stacey Parker Aronson and Windy González Roberts

Together with the Center for Small Towns, we are conducting a study to document the history of the Hispanic experience in the Morris area in the last ten years. In this effort you have been identified as an important community stakeholder in the growth and assimilation of the Hispanic community in the Morris area and Steven's County. We are very interested in hearing your story of involvement with this population. We wish to help you convey your story through either a personal written (or recorded) narrative or a personal interview with one of us or with one of our student assistants. If you are interested in participating, please contact us at one of the following numbers:

Stacey (320-589-6290) [aronsosp@morris.umn.edu](mailto:aronsosp@morris.umn.edu)

Windy (320-589-6294) [wroberts@morris.umn.edu](mailto:wroberts@morris.umn.edu)

The following individuals volunteered to provide oral histories:

- Stacey Parker Aronson, Associate Professor of Spanish, UMM
- Robert Frischmon, Employee at Riverview Farms
- Citali Ibañez
- Lynn Riser, English as a Second Language, Morris Area Schools
- Windy González Roberts, Spanish Teaching Specialist, UMM
- Lisandra Sperr. Employee at Food Service, UMM

Their histories and/or interviews are included below. Wherever necessary, the interviews have been translated into English, and sensitive information has been edited.

**STACEY PARKER ARONSON**  
**ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF SPANISH AT UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA,**  
**MORRIS**

**HISTORY OF SERVICE LEARNING IN SPANISH**

Despite the fact that Spanish language students at the advanced level frequently have studied abroad, the development of the speaking portion of the course still remains the most challenging. Few opportunities exist for them to use their linguistic competence in Spanish in a meaningful way outside of the confines of a structured classroom environment. To overcome this obstacle, I decided to develop the potential for real-life conversation experience and to enhance course content by incorporating a service-learning experience. Service-learning endeavors to join class instruction with community service and outreach in such a way as to mutually benefit both the community partner and the students. Through the incorporation of service-learning in my advanced Spanish language course, I intended to carry out several goals:

- to reinforce the linguistic concepts and vocabulary presented in the course;
- to allow my students interpersonal contact with newly immigrant Hispanic children in order to have opportunities for conversation wherever possible;
- to foster within my students a greater sense of empathy with the Hispanic children and their families, a quality considered to be predictive of successful language acquisition;
- to provide students the opportunity to use their Spanish to assist elementary school students in the acquisition of basic English and Spanish vocabulary;
- to allow my students opportunities to provide assistance in carrying out identified community needs within a number of Hispanic communities in west central Minnesota, within the Morris Area Schools, and within the City of Morris as well.

My interest in service-learning was sparked by my having attended a conference on the topic of service-learning in Spanish facilitated by experts Lucía T. Varona and Josef Hellebrandt (University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN, April 28-29, 2000). While the knowledgeable facilitators and other participants provided much useful information about service-learning projects, they did not adequately address the special problems of trying to incorporate service-learning in Spanish within a geographically isolated area. UMM's unique location in west central Minnesota presents particular logistical challenges when it comes to locating and more importantly to accessing service-learning sites within Hispanic communities. For example, the closest Hispanic community of substantial size is in the Willmar area, about 60 miles from Morris. Our own Hispanic community within the Morris area is growing, and there are particularly community needs, which would lend themselves to service-learning opportunities.

The unique challenges that I, as a language instructor, faced in my efforts to incorporate a service-learning component in my second semester advanced Spanish language course were two-fold. My first challenge was to access and to tap into the increasing Hispanic community here in west central Minnesota. My second challenge was to find opportunities appropriate for those Beginning and Advanced language students, particularly those who have not yet studied abroad.

## **COGNITIVE AND AFFECTIVE BENEFITS**

It was my hope that service-learning would benefit my students both cognitively and affectively. Cognitive benefits for the university students (as well as the elementary school and high school students) included the following:

- real-life opportunities to engage in meaningful (although admittedly linguistically limited) conversation in Spanish in a non-threatening environment;
- and a recognition of the practical applications of their language studies.

Affective benefits for the students included the following:

- feelings of accomplishment and increased self-esteem by providing assistance in carrying out identified community needs;
- interpersonal connection to the Hispanic community in such a way as to (1) dispel racial and ethnic stereotypes, (2) foster an appreciation for the unique cultural gifts of the Hispanic community, and (3) increase their sense of empathy with that community;
- and a higher level of motivation to continue studying Spanish.

## **AFFECTIVE OUTCOMES ON COGNITIVE BEHAVIOR**

Interestingly enough, according to research conducted in the field of Second Language Acquisition, when students practice Spanish in non-threatening environments, they will be more receptive to language acquisition and retention. Likewise, when they experience increased self-esteem and feelings of empathy with members of the Hispanic community, they will also be more successful in language acquisition. A number of researchers in the field of Second Language Acquisition have identified a correlation between self-esteem and oral language ability (Adelaide Heyde 1979; Lambert/Gardner 1972; John Oller, 1977-1978). Others have even hypothesized that a high degree of empathy towards other cultures on the part of students can predict student success in pronunciation and second language acquisition (Alexander Guiora 1972).)

## **PROJECT TIMETABLE**

After an initial orientation period, students began volunteering at the service-learning sites within the first month of the start of fall semester. Ideally, I wanted each student volunteered to work approximately 2 hours per week at his or her chosen site for a total of at least 12 weeks (approximately 24 hours total). This timetable, however, depended upon students' individual schedules and the flexibility of the site supervisors' schedules.



## ASSESSMENT / REFLECTION ACTIVITIES

Students who participated in the voluntary service-learning component of the Spanish 3001 were evaluated on the basis of successful completion of the service-learning agreement (requisite number of hours, adequate performance), a journal and an informal oral class presentation.

Students who elected to participate in the Service-Learning component of the class were exempted from one composition assignment.

### (Questions/Journal)

Each student volunteer answered specific questions related to the concepts of Civic Engagement and Critical Thinking. They also kept a dated journal entry in Spanish for each service-learning session in which s/he engages. The journal included a detailed description of the activities engaged in during the particular session as well as the student's thoughts and perceptions about his/her interactions. For each journal entry each student volunteer:

- described what s/he did at the site;
- described how s/he felt about what s/he was doing;
- described any memorable exchange(s) s/he had in Spanish;
- wrote down any new or unfamiliar Spanish words s/he may have heard;
- **for at least two, no more than three, of the diario assignments**, indicated in detail how the experience related to readings on Hispanic culture that s/he had done in class (For example, Did it validate or invalidate some of the descriptions s/he had read?).

### (Oral Presentation)

Each student volunteer prepared an informal oral presentation for the Spanish language class in which s/he elaborated on the Service-Learning experience and:

- **told** what s/he learned about the Hispanic community or about community perceptions about Hispanics;
- reflected on both the cognitive and affective benefits of the Service-Learning experience;
- indicated whether or not s/he noticed any improvement in language skills and to what does s/he attributed the improvement;
- indicated in detail how the experience related to readings on Hispanic culture that s/he had done in class (For example, Did it validate or invalidate some of the descriptions s/he had read?);
- told whether or not s/he recommended continued placement of student volunteers with the community partner.

## PROJECT EVALUATION

An additional crucial component of assessment was to determine the impact on our community partners. On-site supervisors administered evaluations regarding not only the individual student's performance but also the value of the community partnership with UMM. Student volunteers

also evaluated their service-learning experience as well as the particular service-learning sites with regard to their appropriateness for future service-learning placements.

### **SERVICE LEARNING PROJECTS IN SPANISH**

My Spanish language students (both Beginning and Advanced) participated in various Service Learning projects between 2001 and 2011 (Spring 01, 02, Fall 02, 03, Spring 04, 05, Fall 10, Spring 11) at a variety of locations in Morris and in other communities. I secured funding to help defray the costs of transportation to and from the sites; to purchase teaching materials appropriate for younger children and supplies, such as incentives (pencils and stickers), piñatas and treats for the wrap-up celebrations; to fund photocopying expenses. I also employed a student assistant/coordinator (a Spanish and Education major) via the Morris Administrative Intern Program in 2003, to keep track of the students' service-learning contracts; to assist me in the organizing and coordinating of this program; to coordinate students' schedules at the numerous service-learning sites; to compile an archive of articles related to the teaching of Spanish to elementary school-age children for the use of current and future student volunteers; to observe and evaluate student performances at the sites; and to conduct follow-up discussions with the site supervisors.

Service Learning in Spanish sites included the following:

- **City of Morris:** Advanced Spanish language student volunteers offered their translating skills to local businesses and service organizations that had a need to provide materials in Spanish for local Spanish-speaking customers and clients.
- **Cyrus Math & Technology School** (Cyrus, MN): Advanced Spanish language student volunteers worked weekly with 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade elementary school students in the acquisition of basic Spanish vocabulary through numerous fun activities, such as game playing and occasional videos in Spanish, in order to learn Spanish.
- **Heartland Community Action Headstart Program** (Willmar, MN): Beginning Spanish language student volunteers were placed in one of several Headstart classrooms in the Willmar area in which Hispanic children of between the ages of three and five will be enrolled and assisted in the classrooms, particularly with the Hispanic children for whom their primary language in Spanish.
- **Kerkhoven-Murdock-Sunberg Elementary School:** Advanced Spanish language student volunteers worked weekly with 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade elementary school students in the acquisition of basic Spanish vocabulary through numerous fun activities, such as game playing and occasional videos in Spanish, in order to learn Spanish. Advanced Spanish language student volunteers also tutored Spanish-speaking elementary school students in basic vocabulary acquisition and/or worked with Hispanic elementary school students in an After School Study Program.
- **Morris Area Community Education** (English as a Second Language / GED): Advanced Spanish language student volunteers tutored adults whose heritage language was Spanish in the acquisition of English.
- **Morris Area Community Education Los Amigos en Español:** Advanced Spanish language student volunteers worked with elementary school students in an afterschool

program in the acquisition of basic Spanish vocabulary through numerous fun activities, such as game playing and occasional videos in Spanish, in order to learn Spanish.

- **Morris Area Elementary School** (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade classes): Advanced Spanish language student volunteers worked weekly with 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade elementary school students in the acquisition of basic Spanish vocabulary through numerous fun activities, such as game playing and occasional videos in Spanish, in order to learn Spanish.
- **Morris Area Elementary School** (ESL): Advanced Spanish language student volunteers tutored elementary school students whose heritage language was Spanish in the acquisition of English.
- **Morris Area High School**: Advanced Spanish language student volunteers tutored Spanish language students from the Morris Area High School and organized a Spanish conversation hour at least once per week to benefit the Morris Area High School Spanish language students.
- **Riverview Dairy Outreach Project**: Advanced Spanish language student volunteers tutored adults whose heritage language was Spanish in the acquisition of English.
- **Todd County Hispanic Liaison Office** (Long Prairie, MN): Advanced Spanish language student volunteers participated in a Spanish/English reading program for children and tutored adults in English as a Second Language and/or in computer skills.

### TRANSLATION SERVICES

My advanced Spanish language students also translated written documents into Spanish for a variety of companies and organizations. I edited the translated documents until they met with my satisfaction. This was a free service, designed to help students perfect their written Spanish language proficiency and to provide an identified public service. The companies and organizations, most of which are in Morris, included the following:

- Dental Depot (Dr. Jeffrey Hauger);
- Economic Games (UMM, Professor Steve Burkes);
- Farmer's Market;
- Habitat for Humanity (Willmar, MN);
- HeadStart;
- Home Town Solutions;
- Human Rights Commission;
- Morris Area Elementary School;
- Morris Police Department;
- Smoking Survey (UMM);
- Some Place Safe Women's Shelter;
- Stevens Community Medical Center;
- Stevens County Food Shelf;
- Stevens County Mental Health.

### INTERPRETATION SERVICES

On many occasions too numerous to count, I served as an interpreter (English to Spanish and Spanish to English) for local non-English speaking Hispanics at a variety of locations including the following:

- Dental Depot (Dr. Jeffrey Hauger);
- HeadStart;
- Morris Area Elementary School;
- Morris Police Department;
- Stevens Community Medical Center Behavioral Medicine (via The Bridge);
- Stevens Community Medical Center;
- Stevens County Court House;
- Stevens County Human Services.

### **STEVENS COUNTY HUMAN SERVICES INTERNSHIP**

In the spring of 2009, I worked with Stevens County Human Services director Joanie Murphy to create an internship in which students worked with Hispanic clients to inform them of their eligibility for services and help them fill out any and all requisite forms. Two students participated in this volunteer internship in the spring semester of 2009 and another continued the project in the summer of 2009, all for no academic credits or financial compensation. For your information, I have included the text of the advertisement for the internship below:

*Stevens County Human Services is seeking an enthusiastic and responsible individual interested in an internship to work with Hispanic residents of Stevens County. Person should be a native speaker of Spanish or have spent at least one semester abroad in a Spanish-speaking country. No experience necessary.*

*In this internship, the person will be expected to:*

- *Work with Hispanic residents of Stevens County to inform them as to what social service are available to them and to assist them in filling out the requisite forms to be eligible for such services;*
- *Participate in required internship training sessions with Joanie Murphy, the Director of Stevens County Human Services;*
- *Hold regular office hours at La Tienda, the number of which will be determined in consultation with supervisor(s), during which time the person will meet with drop-in or scheduled clients;*
- *Search for available resources and forms in Spanish;*
- *Create a resource directory;*
- *Advertise this service;*
- *Maintain accurate records for Stevens County Human Services and for future grant possibilities;*
- *Meet regularly with supervisor(s).*

*Commensurate with experience, the person may also be asked to:*

- *Translate some documents into Spanish where these are not available in Spanish;*
- *Interpret for Hispanic clients;*
- *Carry out other relevant tasks as determined by supervisor(s).*

*This is not a paid internship. However, you can choose to receive academic credit (as little as 1 credit) or can choose to do the internship as a volunteer project. In either case, you will be expected to complete a Learning Contract. The hours can be flexible and should be determined in consultation with supervisors Joanie Murphy, the Director of Stevens County Human Services, and Stacey Parker Aronson, Associate Professor of Spanish at UMM. If you are interested, please contact Stacey Parker Aronson at 320-589-3191 or at [aronsosp@morris.umn.edu](mailto:aronsosp@morris.umn.edu).*

The volunteer contract to which the student participants agreed is as follows:

*In this internship, I will be expected to:*

- *Work with Hispanic residents of Stevens County to inform them as to what social services are available to them and to assist them in filling out the requisite forms to be eligible for such services;*
- *Participate in required internship training sessions with Joanie Murphy, the Director of Stevens County Human Services;*
- *Hold regular office hours at La Tienda, the number of which will be determined in consultation with supervisor(s), during which time the person will meet with drop-in or scheduled clients;*
- *Search for available resources and forms in Spanish;*
- *Create a resource directory;*
- *Advertise this service;*
- *Maintain accurate records for Stevens County Human Services and for future grant possibilities;*
- *Meet regularly with supervisor(s);*
- *Be aware of the rights and responsibilities involved in the assigned internship tasks;*
- *Follow and adhere to internship site standards regarding professional behavior and practices;*
- *Complete all elements of the internship contract;*
- *Maintain regular communication with internship supervisors.*

*Commensurate with my experience, I may also be asked to:*

- *Translate some documents into Spanish where these are not available in Spanish;*
- *Interpret for Hispanic clients.*

### **SPANISH LANGUAGE FILM FESTIVAL**

Over the past four years, I have been the primary organizer for what I hope will become an annual event, the Spanish Language Film Festival (Fall 08, 09, 10). In preparation for the film festival, it has been my exclusive responsibility to write grants to fund the film festival, organize the film festival, select and acquire films, conduct publicity, distribute posters (including at the local Riverview Dairy and as far away as Willmar and Alexandria), and compile data on

attendance. Originally, I created and translated the bilingual posters into Spanish myself, but now my colleague Windy González Roberts translates the English texts into Spanish. I have received funding for this film festival from the University of Minnesota, Morris Spanish Discipline (2008, 2009, 2010, 2011), the Morris Theatre Cooperative (2008, 2009, 2010, 2011), the Program for Cultural Cooperation between Spain's Ministry of Culture and U.S. Universities (2008, 2009), and the Lake Region's Arts Council Legacy Fund Grant (2010).

For the purpose of disseminating the richness of Hispanic culture to our community in west central Minnesota, the Spanish discipline of the University of Minnesota, Morris (UMM) in collaboration with the Morris Theatre Cooperative would like to host our fourth annual Festival of Spanish Language Cinema. We would like to show four films, one film (in Spanish with subtitles) on four successive Sundays during the months of October and possibly November of 2011. All films, in Spanish with English subtitles, are free and open to the public.

The Spanish discipline introduces university students to the study of literature and film, one of the most efficient ways to know a foreign language and its culture. Because we are only able to offer one film course every other year, the film festival allows us to expand our offerings by showcasing some of the best Spanish language films and provide an enriching cinematic experience for our university and high school students, and community members, including Hispanics. The film festival will meet this goal by:

- Showing four Spanish language films in October and November of 2011;
- Engaging the audience with a series of conversations held in relation to some of the films shown;
- Collaborating with the local Morris Theatre Cooperative to show the films downtown and off campus for the purpose of attracting more members of our Hispanic community here in Morris who have proved reluctant to attend events on campus;
- Providing opportunities for cultural education and empathy for others through films.

The grant funds will be spent to cover the costs related to (1) the acquisitions of the four, possibly five, films (acquisition, shipping, building and tearing down, and exhibition fees), (2) Morris Theatre usage costs (projectionists, concessions workers, distributor booking charges and theatre rental and management charges) and (3) advertising costs (bilingual posters and mailings to area businesses and schools).

This Festival of Spanish Language Cinema will build bridges between community members, students and recently-arrived Hispanic immigrants, giving them the unique opportunity to connect with each other and with the cinematic arts. Our town of Morris is quite small (5,000 people) and the university is even smaller (1,700 students). The Hispanic population in Morris and in surrounding west central Minnesota is steadily growing. Because our community is geographically isolated in west central Minnesota and quite a distance from major cultural centers (three hours from Minneapolis, two hours from Fargo), we want to bring Hispanic culture to this region to share some of the best Spanish Language cinema to date.

This film festival contributes to the artistic development of our audience members by giving them the opportunity to experience films they would otherwise likely not see. Given our geographic isolation from major urban cultural centers, community members have little to no access to Spanish language films in a movie theatre. It is our goal to institutionalize this event so that students, both university and high school, and community members might look forward to it each year. Also, at the conclusion of some of our films, film and language experts from UMM will engage the viewing audience in conversations in English about the films. Those viewing the movies will be encouraged to participate or simply listen to the conversations to help generate interest in film as a manifestation of both art and culture. These conversations may include exploring cultural differences, interpretation of the film, or specific themes in the movie that have application to our community.

Morris currently has a one-screen movie theatre. Spanish language films, even Academy Award winning films, are rarely, if ever, shown due to the fact that such films are not usually considered commercially viable and may not have a wide audience appeal. There are no efforts apart from ours to bring Spanish language films to the Morris Theatre or to any other area theatres. We have previously hosted three Spanish language film festivals in 2008, 2009 and 2010 to great success. In 2008 we attracted a total of 408 attendees, in 2009 we attracted 483, and in 2010 we attracted 372. Given the size of our community, we are proud of these attendance numbers because they demonstrate the viability of such an endeavor in this region. Since 2008, we have showed films, including award winning films, from Spain, Mexico, Argentina, and Chile. While our selection of films is based upon availability (a film cannot be obtained or shown, irrespective of the quality or country of origin, if there is no distributor in the U.S.), it is also critical that we attempt to find films of high quality and artistic value.

This proposed project builds on past film festivals we have hosted in the following ways:

- We will endeavor to encourage more attendance by area high school students by contacting area high school administrators personally and by inviting them to attend the film festival.
- We will also negotiate with the Morris Theatre manager to show each film at least twice (at 3:00 p.m. and at 7:00 p.m.) or at 9:00 p.m., possibly on alternate days (Sundays / Mondays), as a way to encourage more attendance by local Hispanics. The local dairy, the largest employer of Hispanics in the county, has a shift change at 6:00 p.m., making it difficult for Hispanic employees to get to the theatre in time to see the 7:00 p.m. films. In addition, two film showings will allow Hispanic families, not accustomed to using babysitters, to share child-care duties and still view the films.

By showcasing some of the best Spanish Language cinema, including award-winning films, we try to provide an enriching cinematic experience for our community members. For example, the first film we showed last year—“El secreto de sus ojos / The Secret in Their Eyes”—had won an Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film in 2009. If it had not been for our efforts to bring it to Morris, it would have never shown here or anywhere in the area, despite the critical acclaim it garnered. To see it, one would have had to travel at least three hours to Minneapolis, if

it were being shown there at all. It is often not commercially viable to bring foreign language films to Morris. Because we have a small population from which to draw our audience, most of the movies shown at the Morris Theatre must attract a wide audience and must have a strong likelihood of commercial success. The film festival allows us to show films of high artistic quality without the pressure of having to make money for the theatre.

We will distribute a voluntary evaluation form, in both English and Spanish, either after each showing or at the end of the film festival, and calculate the results. The evaluation form will include the following questions (presented here in English):

1. Did you enjoy the film selections? ☐ Yes ☐ No (Why or why not?)
2. How did you hear about this film festival?  
☐ Poster ☐ Newspaper ☐ Radio ☐ Friend ☐ Internet ☐ Other
3. How likely are you to want to attend again?  
☐ Very likely ☐ Likely ☐ Not very likely ☐ Unlikely
4. Is there anything we could do to improve your film festival experience?
5. Are there any other Spanish language films you would like to recommend for a future film festival?

Film festival attendees look forward to the event each year. In response to a voluntary evaluation, distributed via e-mail to Morris Theatre Cooperative members, all respondents commented that they enjoyed the film selections and that they likely wanted to attend again. One respondent commended the film festival, noting “Many thanks for the excellent selection and for all your work on this! It was one of the most enjoyable movie experience that I have ever had in Morris. Look forward to the next year's festival!”

Another commented, “I had seen none of the movies before and I appreciated hearing the original Spanish audio. I appreciate watching movies from other cultures and this is a great opportunity to do that.” Co-sponsors will include the Morris Theatre Cooperative and UMM student organization *Vamos Juntos* affiliated with Spanish and Hispanic culture. This student organization will help sell concessions at the theatre and, most importantly, will encourage attendance by their members.

We will continue to do all that we can to encourage attendance by all community members while paying special attention to local Hispanics. In order to reach as wide and as diverse an audience as possible, we will avail ourselves of the efforts and resources we have used for the past two years to advertise and encourage attendance. UMM External Relations will issue press releases to area newspapers in Morris, Hancock, Benson, Willmar, Alexandria, and Fergus Falls and



provide a link with information about the film festival on our UMM Home page. We will issue a weekly e-mail to all UMM students, faculty and staff and blanket the UMM campus and city of Morris with bilingual posters, paying particular attention to our Hispanic grocery store, Mexican restaurant and local dairy. In our advertising campaign, Ridgewater Community College in Willmar, Alexandria Technical College as well as local businesses in Cyrus, Elbow Lake and Benson, will receive bilingual posters for display. We will be interviewed for our local radio station KKOK and will announce the week's film in both Spanish and English. We will use the Prairie Renaissance Cultural Alliance (PRCA) list serve to advertise the event. We will also send personal letters with film descriptions to at least 24 area high schools to encourage their attendance at the film festival.

It is our goal that those target populations attending the film festival—namely community members, including Hispanics, and students, both high school and university—will experience the event in positive ways.

- All attendees will have a positive experience and enjoy the films.
- Foreign language students at both the high school and the university levels will have opportunities to practice their listening skills as they watch films in Spanish.
- Attendees who do not know or speak Spanish will benefit from the English subtitles.
- Both students and community members and students throughout the region will benefit from the experience of seeing films that represent a cultural reality sometimes similar but often quite different from their own, thereby gaining empathy.
- Hispanics will feel welcome.
- Between 350 and 400 people will attend the film festival.

By raising public awareness about Hispanics and their contributions to society and to the arts, we hope to create a more hospitable and welcoming community in which to live. Also, by showing quality films in Morris, we hope to benefit local businesses by keeping film goers and foreign film enthusiasts--and their entertainment dollars--here in Morris.

**ROBERT FRISCHMON**  
**EMPLOYEE AT RIVERVIEW DAIRY**  
**INTERVIEWED BY JORDAN WENTE**

Jordan: So, I guess I'd just have you begin by speaking a little bit about yourself, your background, and your connection to the Latino population here in Morris.

Robert: My name is Robert Frischmon. I work at Riverview farms, and at Riverview, I am the Spanish and English teacher. My wife is from Colombia...so..that's about it.

Jordan: How long have you been working at Riverview farms?

Robert: 4 years now.

Jordan: Ok, so you're bilingual in English and Spanish.

Rob: Yeah. I was an English teacher for 14-15 years before. And ah...basically, I was in Minnesota, and I was talking to a lady, --I was working as a cook at a restaurant. I was looking for some part time work, thinking I might be able to find some part time work. I mentioned to her that I was an English teacher, or an ESL teacher. Then I got a phone call a few weeks later, and she told me that there was a farm, in west central Minnesota, and that they were looking for a Spanish teacher. I put my resume together and sent it away. And I figured, well...I'll just apply to the same techniques as an ESL teacher and teach Spanish. Well, my Spanish wasn't as good as I thought it was but it was fluent enough. And, I've learned along the way. They've been really helpful with me. And I was able to get my degree while working there --my Spanish degree. So yeah, you know, I had two years of university Spanish at a university. And the rest was from the street, and from my wife, Rosa. Through teaching, I've learned a lot.

Jordan: So then you have experience with Latin America by travelling?

Robert: Well, my first experience was working in Chicago, at the Hyatt. I was working with other Latinos, and so I remember, the first word I learned was to ask another worker for a pitcher of water, I'd say, "Una jarra para agua por favor." So, that was my introduction to Spanish --necessity of course. And then I went to a restaurant in Chicago, and I was the only English speaker there. I got along really well with those guys. We'd go out and eat Mexican food together after work. It was really great. I really liked the culture and well, the whole environment. So, I always thought that learning Spanish would be a good thing for me. And many of the employees in the restaurant business are Spanish speaking.. so, when I was in Lake Tahoe, I took 2 years of Spanish. And then I wanted to travel all over the world. My plan was to head south from Mexico all the way to Argentina, and then take a slow boat to China and, that was my goal. But I had to go through Latin America. So...I started out here. and I got in a truck, my truck, and I got down to El Paso, I crossed the border, and well, then they said that I'd have to get a bond for my truck. So I went back to El Paso, and I sold my truck, and said, well, you'll

have to give me a ride to the bus depot. And alls I could say was, “Puedo ir al Chihuahua”? They got me to Chihuahua, and that was the start to my Latin American experience. On that trip, I travelled for a year and a half. I got as far as Nicaragua. 6 months in Mexico, 3 months Guatemala, 3 months in El Salvador, 2 months in Honduras, and just a couple weeks in Nicaragua. Part of the reason that I wanted to go to Latin America was because I knew a priest, a family friend, and this priest did mission work in Guatemala. So I wanted to visit with him, and while I was there, I stayed with some indigenous peoples, and helped them build some communal buildings. They were crushed by hurricane Mitch, and just by chance, I went there and helped them raise their buildings. And I learned a lot there. Man, they didn’t have anything. They didn’t have drinking water. We had to boil water from the river. I thought, wow, we have everything back home. I remember a guy telling me...que me dijo “tienes muchas bendiciones [you have so many blessings]” I learned that word and I really took that to heart. And you know, I realized that I had everything, so you know what’s going on here then? So that’s when I learned to be happy.

Jordan: Well, that’s incredible. What a great story.

Rob: Yeah, you know, that was the point, to learn the cuisines and cultures of the world. But then I had to go home. My mother became sick, and she ended up passing away. And then I went back, flew back to Venezuela, travelled through Colombia, and then met my wife in Ecuador. I stopped there. You know?

Jordan: That’ll do it.

Rob: Then I went back to the Twin Cities and worked for 4 months --saved some money up, and then I went back. We moved to Bogota, I ended up getting married and staying there in Bogota for 3 years. I took the SELF, a course for teaching ESL. Because when I was in El Salvador I taught a little bit of ESL, and I really liked it. In fact I loved it. and then, when I was in Bogota, I realized that that was a job that you do, and then you get paid to travel all over the world. And then you get paid because they want to keep you. It’s not like working in a restaurant --they don’t care if they lose you. You’re kind of a decoration. But by taking the SELF you’re kind of qualified to teach. So I taught at the university for 3 and a half years. and then I went to Miami. Rosa and I thought it would be easier to kind of slide into American culture before going to Minnesota. So I taught ESL in Miami, and EF..it’s an international school, English language school. And then from there, we moved back to MN. Then from there, I moved to here.

Jordan: Sure. OK. So I think then that we could make a good transition from your extensive background in Latin cultures. Coming to Stevens County, what were the first things that stood out to you, regarding the Latino population and comparing it with other Latino populations you may be familiar with. What things could you comment on?

Robert: Well, to be honest with you, I don't know too much about Latin populations in the US. What really distinguishes Morris is the visa program and, more than that, the majority of the people here are educated. They have university degrees, both mother and father. That's what really separates Morris from other Latino populations. [...] And that was part of my goal with Lazos, it was to try to break down those barriers so that the ladies didn't feel as isolated as...because its difficult. So that they could work together, break down those barriers, and work together as a unit. Break down those cliques. There are a lot of cliques...that is I used to see a lot of them, I don't know how it is now...but it's a problem particularly with the ladies. I don't know, maybe it's just natural. It could just be natural.

Jordan: do you think that division is caused by socioeconomic differences...or is it more ethnic based? or regional?

Robert: You know, I don't know. The whys of they're up here are probably well educated and umm...as far as I know.

Jordan: Right...the laborers can't afford to bring their families up here.

Robert: Yeah...I never really read that one book. One of the books says that if you want...umm...you know, if you want the culture, the groups to intermingle with other groups--- people in Morris. They need to be strong and confident in their own groups first. So...idk [I don't know]...that's what I see. Like i was sitting on a meeting 6 months ago, and this lady said, "wow!" you guys really have a lot going on! you know what you're doing, there are so many positive things. It helps when you have people here on visas. [There is a] difference too. These people are educated. That's why they're not afraid to come into town, they have nothing to be afraid of, they have every right to be here. I think that's a huge difference. So on a whole as a society, if we could figure out how to do that, we'd all be better off. So I think that is what makes Morris unique.

Jordan: I can definitely speak about that. I'm from a small town with a large Latino population. And they are definitely come from a lower, working class. I'm not sure exactly what industries they are involved in, but I've noticed that although they may make up a large portion of the population comparatively, one really does not see them too often. They really tend to hide away in their homes. There will be these summer festivities, etc., and the Latino population is non-existent. Or churches will put on large banquets, and one also does not see them.

Rob: Mmhmm...yeah, and I would say that is a little common here. There are some ladies that have gone into the high school, or grade school. And there are other people that are getting out there. I think people definitely try to get out more here. That's what Lazos is trying to do, we're trying to create those ties, create those bridges for people to get to know each other. And you know what...it's happening. Without us even having to do anything. Umm, I mean, I see people, the Latinos know people, you know, they just know them from school because of their kids, because of whatever circumstances they have going on in their lives, they know people through

that. It's nice, and the English classes are nice, I think. They come in, and even if it's just the University, afterwards they go to the Tienda, or Willie's [local grocery store], or you know, they're getting into town, and if they feel comfortable with it, they'll come again.

Jordan: One other different aspect about Morris is that it is no medium or large city nearby. And so, as the center of commerce, etc. There is no other alternative.

Rob: Yeah, a lot of guys go to Willmar. Because there is a very large Latino population in Willmar, well, and Best Buy, etc....

Jordan: Could you elaborate a little on Riverview farms. I guess I'm not that familiar with it.

Rob: Well, it's a dairy, that produces milk. You know, so they bring up guys through the visa program, I think it's with NAFTA, and so guys work with Riverview with that.

Jordan: And the company provides housing?

Rob: Correct. And they don't have to accept it, but it has really nice housing facilities. They don't have to live there, but it has really nice laundry facilities, nice kitchen, two bathrooms, each pod. They're really nice, comfortable places to live. You know, these guys have come here to work. And it's safe, there is no pornography, or alcohol allowed. It's a good place to work. You don't have to worry about some guy coming home being drunk, or whatever. So, it's healthy I guess, is the word, it's a positive, healthy. But if they don't want to, they can live in a town or whatever.

[...]

Jordan: These farms are located outside of Hancock? -- 19:21

Robert: Yeah, there's one outside here. Umm, yeah, one right outside here.

Jordan: Ok...how many Mexican workers --well, they're all pretty much Mexican right?

Robert: Umm yeah, I think so...I'm not sure though..

Jordan: How many Hispanics does Riverview employ?

Robert: I don't really know.

Jordan: An estimate?

Robert: Nope, don't really know.

Jordan: Do you know what parts of Mexico they come from?

Robert: Yeah, a lot of them come from Guanajuato and Pueblo and Tomalipas and then guys from various places, but the majority of them come from Guanajuato or Pueblo or Tomalipas..

Jordan: And of those workers that are coming up, what percentage would you say are college educated or at least high school educated?

Robert: Umm, I don't know, no...

Jordan: OK. Well, I find it interesting, but I've noticed --and this could be different now--but last semester, it seemed like the majority of JA [Jane Addams] participants were college educated, whereas with the ESL classes, there would be more manual laborers participating, I could be wrong though. Do you think that might be true?

Robert: Well, the guys who go to JA are more comfortable with their English. I don't think the percentage of participants would be more educated. I would say it's about the same. I think it would be about the same, actually. I don't think the guys...uh..yeah, I don't really have any idea.

Jordan: What are the most positive aspects that the community of Morris offers to newly arrived Hispanic individuals?

Robert: I would say no outwardly racial biases. I don't think that people feel angry ...go out of their way to make people feel not welcome. So, I would say...well, from the people I'm in contact with, I guess wh..I've heard a few stories, but with the majority of people it's been positive....ummm hellos, smiles at least, I don't think people feel like they are not wanted here in Morris. There is a difference, you know? I remember when I was travelling, you could tell when going through town, or wherever, if you were welcome or not. Some places you were king of the world, other places you got darts..you know people wanted to kill you. --well, not kill you, but they didn't want you there, they didn't appreciate you being there. So I think...I always wonder about that when I walk around town. You know, how do people perceive living in Morris...and I think people are just ambivalent to be honest, one way or the other..it's just ...I think that's positive. It's a lot easier when people are ambivalent as opposed to negative. It makes everything easier. Other than that, I don't really know. People are really willing to do what they can to help people. I don't think it matters...where they're from. I think there is overall a goodwill amongst people from Morris.

Jordan: Do you think that among the vast majority of Latinos and Hispanics, it is completely an economic decision? Are they being hired before they come? or Are they being brought up by family members? The difference would be whether they are employed --or given the job offer in Mexico, as opposed to coming up, then being employed.

Robert: Well, I think they are definitely recommend[ed], I mean people recommend coming up here. There are friends, brothers, brothers or cousins, or whoever that come...that "hey, this is a good place to work" --that type of thing. And, I think ..I mean generally speaking, yes, people come here for the economics. Not many people want to leave their family, you know, just for money. If they could find work down there, they would. The security too, that has changed a

lot, the dynamic. It's now really dangerous to live in Mexico, especially around Tomalipas. It's very dangerous. Ciudad Victoria is very dangerous.

Jordan: with Cartel violence?

Robert: Yeah...so I think that has a lot to do with it. I think...that....a lot....of people come up because that's what their Dads' do. That's what people do.

Jordan: Really?

Robert: Yeah...it's kind of changed...you know, they've grown up with guys get old enough and they go off to the US to make some money. That...that's what's normal for them....It's a cultural thing, yeah.

Jordan: Interesting...Morris is so distant from Mexico. If I were a Hispanic worker, I'd opt for someplace closer to home...but then, if work is the most important thing, you're going to go where the demand is. It makes some sense with the families, too. From what I've heard, Morris really is a very safe place to raise a Hispanic family. It does have many positive family attributes. But even still, it is somewhat remote.

Robert: Well, even still, a lot of the guys coming up are from remote areas...They're cowmen and veterinarians.. We don't get many guys from Mexico City. The majority of guys that come up here are veterinarians and they come from places, rural Mexico towns that have 5000 or 2000 people. Those are the stories that I hear, so it's not that big of a deal. That's what makes it what it is.

Jordan: What is your general opinion of service learning opportunities/programs that the University organizes? Well, for example, what is your general opinion about the effectiveness of JA [Jane Addams]?

Robert: Well...I think JA [Jane Addams] is incredible. Yeah, It's really unbelievable. That they can meet together to exchange cultures and speak English and talk about their country and whatever, just have general conversation.. is unbelievable. And the ESL program is really great, too. The volunteer students from the University are unbelievable. The amount of effort and energy they put into this program is incredible.

Jordan: I'm always surprised about how many students are involved. A lot of my friends do it, and they only speak well of it.

Robert: Oh yeah...and I hope it keeps going! More than anything, what I see from it, is that it is a positive event... As opposed to staying at home, or watching TV or whatever, they get to go out, get out of the house and do something different. They get to use their brains, they get to learn something. They're excited to go..they feel welcome. That to me is the number 1 thing. And then practicing their English on top of it...it's even better..you know? The best thing, is the

fact that they can get out and have positive experiences. It's the same thing with the soccer league. Guys get out, and they get to play soccer. They get rid of all the stress from working.. They get to just do something physical. It's really therapeutic. Really! Going to ESL classes and JA [Jane Addams], and doing soccer night...it's therapeutic. It's amazing. After working all day, they still want to play soccer. It's amazing, and everyone can see it. They're smiling and everybody's happy.

Jordan: Yeah! For a while, before I left school, I had a friend who was half Mexican, and he invited me to play soccer with a large number of Latino men. That was an experience. 60 of them would show up, and it was a very cool experience. Some of the guys were really old, but they could play so well. And then we started inviting other high school guys to play. It was sometimes hard to get them to commit, but soon more and more high school guys would play. How often do you guys play?

Robert: Once a night, Wednesday night at 7:30 to 9, at the middle school gym. I wish we could get more university students involved. Makes it even better. There are no defined teams, we just play. You get to meet people. It puts everyone on the same level, the same base. That's what's so special about it.

Jordan: So...can you tell me a little bit about Lazos?

Robert: Yeah! So we started with Marisol. She was a university professor, she came up with a Fulbright scholarship, I think. And one of her interests was kind of to see what the Latino population needed up here. Through that she got us, me and Windy Roberts, and Edna Mar, and uhh, we signed it up, and Lisandra as well and, uh, Hilda Ladner... and Yuri...and that was the base.. We just kind of, we've been doing it for a year and a half and we're trying to make ties. The name, Lazos, means ties, and we're trying to bridge the gap and create positive events -- opportunities for people to get to know each other. That's how people are going to start.. It's the basics, people are always seen, and this is to get to get to know each other. --learn about the different cultures etc.. but at the base, we're all the same. So, it's realizing that, but also celebrating our differences. You know, we're breaking down the stereotypes.

Jordan: So, to close things up, among all the services—university-based, non university-based, volunteer programs, etc.—what changes, what major changes would you like to see, in the community?

Robert: Ummm, that's a good question.

Jordan: Could be any small, specific thing or problem..

Robert: Yeah, you know, sometimes I feel kind of bad because I don't have any negatives... I feel like I'm kind of living under a rock, or I stick my head in the sand. I just think that we need to keep on making as many people aware of the possibilities and opportunities that we have. On



both sides, and to take advantage of the things we are doing, as far as specific organizations or that? I can't see anything. It's got to come out of the grassroots. If everyone is aware of that people are interested in extending their hand, and if other people extend their hand --if that's the society that we have, then we can start to figure out what is that we actually need. In my case in the past, I've thought "this is what they need, and this what we can do," and so I began to question is that was really the right thing to for the people we serve --with Lazos--- if that was really where money, where my time was best spent. Instead of me trying to figure out what is they want or they need or giving things that I think that they want, well, you know what, we need to build and integrate and try to work from that. Not necessarily from an organization coming in and throwing out money at something --that's what the issue is just try to get a better understanding of where everything is at. And from that understanding, move forward. I think Lazos, we need to work on that. ESL is a no brainer, and soccer is a no brainer. But where we go from here? We've thought about doing other things... at this point what else can we do? We need to have more people on our board, we need to have people on our board who are actually Hispanic or Latino. You know? We have some...Windy is from Venezuela and Hilda's mother is from Mexico...my wife is from Colombia, so it's not like we're completely disconnected. and Edna is definitely from Mexico.. so you know...well, and Lazos has only been here for a year and a half. We're still finding our way, we're still moving. Well, if we can just keep on finding more positive events to do and raise awareness as much as possible, on both sides, it's not just that Morris community to extend to the Latino community, it's also the Latino community to extend to the Morris community---that they do come, that they do take risks. By coming to the ESL classes, by going to JA [Jane Addams], they've def. shown interest. And that there are people volunteering in the grade school. So yeah, more opportunities for people to volunteer. Once the barriers are taken down, people realize that there is no difference --there are differences obviously--- but that's all that needs to happen, just create those opportunities for people to get to know each other. And you know, it's going to happen through the kids --through sports--- through whatever other things that are going on. So...another good program is the TREC program...yeah...to do extra reading, it's really good. And also the grade school has this extra class, it's not ESL, but it gives opportunities for reading. There are great programs--so many people are doing great things. There are so many nonprofits in Morris ---in Stevens County -- hundreds. and now there is a group trying to coordinate the nonprofits, they need to say hey, I'm doing this, you're doing that.. Let's figure out what we're all doing together. You know?? Just make everyone aware of the opportunities that there are...

Jordan: OK. I think that we are done. Thank you so much, I really appreciate it!

Robert: Yeah. no problem! Anytime.

**INTERVIEW WITH NANCY HUOT  
MORRIS RESIDENT, FIRST OWNER OF LA TIENDA  
INTERVIEWED BY CRISTINA MONTAÑEZ**

**C:** Cristina

**N:** Nancy Huot

**C:** Good afternoon, my name's Cristina. Can you please state your name, tell me a little bit about where you're from and how long you've lived in Morris?

**N:** My name's Nancy Huot. I'm originally from Vancouver, Washington and I've lived in Morris for 14 years. And my husband's job with the University is why we moved here.

**C:** Oh, okay. So you moved here in what year?

**N:** In 1998.

**C:** In '98. Okay, so tell me a little bit about what you do here in Morris.

**N:** I mostly work at the school, for the school district, either in the Media Center as the media manager, that they send around the library, or a Title I educator. I did that, then I gave my resignation and opened La Tienda, and when I sold La Tienda, I am now back at the school.

**C:** Oh, okay. How long did you do....how long were you at the school before you...

**N:** Six years.

**C:** Six years. And why did you decide to open La Tienda?

**N:** Because I knew some Hispanic residents and I knew that they were traveling out of Morris to buy products that they were familiar with. So I decided that there needs to be something that can keep that population in Morris and to help business in Morris so they weren't, you know, going out of town to buy products. So that's why.

**C:** Okay. Will you tell me a little bit about how you decided...how you went about starting the business?

**N:** Well actually it was really fast. We decided in December and were opened in May. So it was kind of just really quick. And mostly there was some students at school. I work at the high school. And so there was some students at the high school, that were attending high school there, and I knew that their families worked out at the dairies, and I knew that they would go to Willmar, Minneapolis on weekends, so it kind of evolved from there. And then I put the word out that I was looking for someone to be a manager of the store because I didn't even speak Spanish. So there was a family from one of the dairies that contacted me and then I hired Marco Chapa as manager. And so we went and toured a store in Willmar and went to St. Cloud and contacted some different vendors and finally we just started ordering inventory. From there I just, honestly gave him full control. They were from Mexico and they'd only been up here for about six months and he had ran a restaurant in Mexico prior to so he had some business experience. So we kind, him and his wife went through and ordered different products that they thought families in Morris would need that they couldn't find here, you know some products native to Mexico. So we stocked the store and he ran it for about a year and a half. And then his

visa, he needed to go back, so I hired some other people and then I eventually sold the store. But that's how we got it started. We just looked at, found some wholesalers of products from Mexico and went through the catalog and stocked the store.

C: And how was...how did you choose the location? Or was it just because it's on Main?

N: Because it's on Main, it was vacant and the price was right. So that's kind of where we...I mean we looked at some other options, the Mall, but we thought it needed to have its own parking lot so we just chose that side...

C: Okay, and did you come across any...what were some of the biggest difficulties that you came across while trying to open the store or trying to get the whole thing started?

N: Actually some business did not want me having the store in their location. We were turned down by one because they did not want that clientele coming to their...because it would have been a shared building, you know, we would have rented part of it, and they did not want Hispanic people. They were honest but it was horrible! They just did not think that it would be good for their business. They thought that having a Mexican store would actually harm their business. So yea we did find some prejudice and some people were not at all thrilled. You know, I was not a popular person in some groups for opening a store. So yea, we found some obstacles like that but otherwise the city seemed to be pretty open.

C: But you overcame them and opened up.

N: Oh yea, it wasn't going to stop me! So...it is America.

C: There you go! Okay, um, let's see, so then how long did you own the store?

N: Two years.

C: For two years?

N: Two years, yea.

C: And why did you decide to sell it?

N: I wasn't making, I could only...it wasn't very profitable. It was just a lot of time. I have three children, they're older now. But it was just...my husband has a demanding job so he's gone a lot so I needed to be home and the store just took up...I mean I had to be there all the time. So it was too much time and not enough income, I guess. So that's kind of why I sold it.

C: Okay then, and if you don't mind me asking, who did you sell it to?

N: Edna del Mar. And I specifically wanted to sell it to a family from one of the dairies. So that was my choice, was to sell it to actually somebody from Mexico that could maybe expand it, know a little bit more. So I said, somebody that could hopefully take it and run with it. So I sold it to Edna and her husband Cruz.

C: So you were one of the people here in Morris that was able to provide a service for the expanding Latino community...

N: That was our goal...yea...

C: So you were able to provide a service for them. What other services did you see around town, since you've been here for 14 years, what other services have you seen that, either in Stevens County or Morris community or that the University offers, that helped at the time that you were trying to open the store?

N: Insurance, car insurance was a big one. I mean a lot of people needed car insurance so we would call. Actually Marco would provide a lot of translation services because you know to go get car insurance, to go get tabs for their vehicles, medical services, I know there's the... I think they're getting better now, but when they first started, the Hispanic population started coming to Morris, there wasn't a lot of translation services. It was done over a telephone. In fact, I brought a gentleman into the emergency room, I could just do a little bit, I mean it was really hard, and it was kind of a life threatening thing for him and having to do it over the phone was really difficult. But I think they've gotten a little bit better. They have some more staff at hand that's bilingual. So I know that's one area that when the Hispanic population first started in Morris there wasn't a lot of translation services. It was really difficult, especially in medical care.

C: I can see that. And did you partner with any, and this is going back to when you opened the store, did you partner with any other organizations or businesses around town?

N: I did get a loan from the Stevens Community Economic Development and West Central Initiative gave me some financing to start with too. They gave me some startup loans. But otherwise that would be about it. I'm kind of thinking... like I said, it was just so quick. We just got the idea over Christmas break, me and my husband! And then it was like, we were off May 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup>, I think May 7<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup>, I can't really remember. So yea, it was really quick.

C: Wow. That's very cool. So now in this present time, how well equipped do you see Morris in their ability to provide proper services, or the activities or organizations that we offer for Hispanic newcomers?

N: It's gotten better, but I still think there needs to be a lot more. I mean I think there need to be more inclusion in a lot of things, even just the media, the radio, the newspaper. I mean really if you're new to Minnesota and your language, English skills aren't that great you really miss out on a lot of community events because you don't have access to that information. So I said I think as far as the media goes we need to do a lot more. But otherwise, I think medical, insurance, you know, a lot of those obstacles have been fixed. I still think the media doesn't... we need to find a way to get community involvement

C: I believe that. So this is one of the things that we're trying to get out of this project as well, what can we do to improve? So you said media, but what other things around town would you like to see more of?

N: Oh gosh. That's a hard question, I really... I think just more community activities that involve everybody. Not even just the Hispanic population, any, any population. I think we need to have more. Which the community tries, but I think communication is probably the biggest lack in things that we have

**C:** Okay then. So in present time, what are, well this is your opinion, but what are some of the positive aspects that you see that Morris offers to a newly arrived Hispanic family or individual?

**N:** Well if they have children, we have an excellent education system. I mean, the schools are great, they have a good ELL program, the bilingual preschool, the school's really trying to do all they can to accommodate new families and their children. Housing, I think is a concern. Medical, dental, they're starting to be more facilities that will... dentists are hard because none of them are taking patients and that's just for anybody. But some of the language barriers are starting to come down for medical services and insurance. Communication is a real problem for someone, you know, just general day to day stuff no matter where you relocated if you didn't speak the language, so those are just some obstacles

**C:** And, this is kind of going back to, because you work at the high school

**N:** Now, I work at the elementary.

**C:** Now you work at the elementary.

**N:** When I sold the store I went back to the elementary.

**C:** Okay then. Will you tell me a little bit about what you do there? Do you work with kids or do you work in an office?

**N:** Well I kind of do... technically, I work with the gifted program, I run the study hall and I do math interventions for students that struggle with math, ELL students, or any student that struggles with math, I pull them and we do one on one math skills and math tutoring. So that's what I do all day. It's nice I like it.

**C:** So you get to see from the inside that we do provide a good ELL program for newly arrived students.

**N:** Yes.

**C:** Okay and I know we're jumping around a little.

**N:** That's okay!

**C:** What kind of attitudes were you met with once you opened the store? Was it mostly positive once it was already open?

**N:** No. Not at first. It was not at all. It was mixed but primarily negative.

**C:** Oh.

**N:** Yea. So, and I think now...okay...now this...a lot of families would come to the store and tell me. At first when the workers started coming, they were kind of, I don't know how to say it, they were not told, but they were encouraged not to come into Morris. [Instead] to go to Willmar, to go to the larger towns because Morris was such a small population...it was like Morris doesn't want... I mean and this is just what I was told no and to not spend a lot of time in Morris, to go to Willmar. I think that's changed now because the whole community as a whole has been more accepting, but at first the community was not, not all the community, but some of the community

was not accepting for having a new population coming to Morris. It's kind of, we've been here forever, it's really ignorance but anyway, it was not a positive at first. I think now, as time goes on, it's changing, the people are, they're attitudes are starting to warm. So yea, at first it was very mixed. Some people were not at all happy that a new population was coming to Morris.

**C:** And what kind of attitudes were you met with from the Hispanic community? Was it more kind of...

**N:** That was mixed too, because I wasn't from Mexico. So it was kind of mixed. It took a little bit to kind of see the motives. I wasn't out to make a dollar, obviously I didn't make any! But you know to see that the store was really there to help with anything from insurance to medical to just be a...the reason...it was mostly just to be a resource center with products. But it was kind of to be just like a help center, you know kind of a help desk, a place where you can come and find out, you know, "where do I go to do this? How do I get a driver's license? How do I get car insurance? Do we need..." You know a lot of rental questions. You know, I looked at I don't know how many leases for people because they weren't in Spanish, it's really hard to see and explain the lease to them and say, "This is what they're asking or this is..." I mean it was a lot of that type of stuff.

**C:** So it was more of a resource, it wasn't...it provided several things.

**N:** That was more the focus. That was my whole intent more than just being a retail store. It was still kind of a place for everybody to come and find out, you know, "where can I get car insurance? Or how do I..." Because housing for families, you know they can't stay at the dairies. Housing is an issue and that still is an issue. But anyway, that was trying to help people find decent housing was an issue.

**C:** Okay, and kind of to wrap it up a little bit, what, in your time that you've lived here in Morris, what have our experiences been with the Hispanic community? At first you were met with contempt and they weren't sure but throughout time how has that changed?

**N:** Oh it's good! It's good. When I see families in town, it's very nice, or at the school. I, you know, one of the, last year I helped a lot of guys with their taxes. And even after I sold the store, even a year later, they came to my house actually and would ask. Now this year I think that the dairy is offering to do them all for free. But like I said I still had people for a couple of years come and ask me or to help them with other questions. Yea, I've had people come to my house with a form or just with a problem they don't know how to deal with it. So it's kind of nice, it's kind of nice that they trust. That was a big thing. I wanted to make sure people knew they could trust, I wasn't going to break that trust. So that said, it was kind of nice.

**C:** Okay, and you can tell me if you don't want to answer, but how are you Spanish speaking skills? Have you picked up some of it?

**N:** Oh much better! I can have a basic conversation, very slow but... because I said when the guys would come over for a problem, I could usually understand what the problem was and I would try to answer it, broken, but they would get the gist of what I was trying to say. I could understand what they were trying to say and they could, you know it wasn't a fluent conversation but we could communicate, so it definitely has gotten better. And that's just more from exposure

from being in the store, you know, all day long and that's all we would hear. We were listening to Spanish music and I said, you know, it was just more of an immersion thing so...

C: So for you it was a better...it wasn't only a resource for the community but it was also for you.

N: Like I said, financially it was not a good move, but personally and growth wise, it was one of the best things I've ever done.

C: Very, very cool.

N: I guess money's not everything!

C: No, it's not.

N: Yea, so...

C: Okay, well those are all the questions that I have for you unless you want to share something else?

N: No. I think I answered, I hope I answered everything correctly.

C: Oh there's no right or wrong.

N: Oh I mean that I gave you information you needed, so...

C: Yea, okay. Well, thank you very much. Thank you for your time

**CITALLI IBAÑEZ**

**INTREVIEWED BY JORDAN WENTE**

**TRANSCRIPTION TRANSLATED BY JORDAN WENTE**

Citalli: My name is Citalli Ibañez.

Jordan: Well..to start, I'd like you to tell me a little about yourself. For example, what are your pastimes? Or..rather, what do you like to do in your free time?

Citali: My pastimes include cooking, reading, and spending time with the children. My time is divided up with children and some volunteer work.

Jordan: What volunteer work?

Citali: Lazos, Jane Addams, The preschool...yeah.

Jordan: From what part of Latin America are you from?

Citali: From the city of Salamanca, Guanajuato in Mexico.

Jordan: OK, being a American student somewhat far away from Salamanca, how would describe Salamanca to me?

Citali: OK...well...my city is pretty famous because it has a refinery, a very large cultural center, an xx-convent that has many ancient and historic works. They create art out of iron, they have bronze workshops etc. They also make candles. The refinery moves the economy of the city.

Jordan: What is the population of Salamanca?

Citali: I'm not really sure.. I can look it up for you. It's a city with little expansion, but with a lot of people.

Jordan: 500,000?

Citali: More...it's a middle-sized city.

Jordan: What interests me is how they mix together art with industry.

Citlali: Well, we are in an industrial belt. My city is located in what is called El Bajillo. It's basically an agricultural zone that produces many exports --fruits, vegetables, there are large



shipping firms. We're pretty close to the capital -- 3 hours. There is the industrial belt, the agricultural center, and the Baillo. For this reason, everything is mixed together.

Jordan: Like our Boston.

Jordan: Before coming to Morris, did you live your entire life in Salamanca? Did you study in Salamanca?

Citali: I studied in another city, Leon. Guanajuato.

Jordan: Did you study in a University?

Citali: Yes, a university.

Jordan: And, what was your major?

Citali: Veterinary Medicine, I am a technician.

Jordan: How is it that you first learned about Morris?

Citali: My husband came for a job offer. So...we came for the work opportunities.

Jordan: How was he offered the job?

Citali: A friend, one of my peers from college, said that he needed someone to work in a "Digestor." He worked for a company that made digestors. And at that moment, my friend had mentioned that they would need someone skilled in that field, and that there was going to be an interview --if he would like to go. And he went.

Jordan: And so now you and your family are here, but your relatives?

Citali: My whole family lives in Mexico. We don't have a single relative, not a cousin, not an uncle, from my side, no one. Absolutely nobody from my family has ever lived in the US. On my husband's side, there are a couple of relatives that live near the border.

Jordan: And, do you support, in any form, relatives over in Mexico?

Citali: No, we don't really support any one. We don't provide any economic support. We keep in contact with them --they are our family, but we don't send any money.

Jordan: OK, so, going back to your first arrival here in Morris, what degree of difficulty did you experience?

Citali: The first difficulty is the language. It this [is] the first difficulty that there is. Hmm...the lack of services.. At the beginning, it was the lack of services.

Jordan: What type of services?

Citali: For example, there is no public telephone.

Jordan: No, that doesn't really exist.

Citali: This is different for me. When I arrived, I looked around for some kind of public telephone so that I could call home.

Jordan: Yes...well, everyone here has a cell-phone or some kind of home phone.

Citali: Exactly. That was the first that I noticed lacking. I thought to get up early and call home. So, I had to acquire some other phone. Hmm, public transit is also very different here. That was a big difference.

Jordan: Yes, here in Minnesota, we still have not adopted a large system of public transit. Everyone here has a car of some sorts.

Citali: Yes, it was all very strange to me. The system here is very different. I noticed it when my sister came. When her plane arrived, she called me and asked what bus she should get on to arrive in Morris.

Jordan: Did you arrive by plane?

Citali: Yes, in a plane.

Jordan: To Minneapolis?

Citali: Yes.

Jordan: OK, what were your first impressions of Minnesota upon first arriving?

Citali: mmm...well, you see what happened was that my husband arrived first. Afterwards we came, he came about 6 months before us.

Jordan: OK.

Citali: So, when he arrived, it was a different sensation because we were wanting to go to see him. And when the whole family arrived, I had come to get to know Morris and Minnesota. I came, and he had just been here for two months. I came to see him. So, I already visited Minneapolis. I had seen Morris before.

Jordan: But I mean, “your” first arrival.

Citali: OK, well I arrived in the winter. I remember when they opened the doors of the airport.

Jordan: yeah...

Citali: One never forgets that sensation...that coldness. That first time...and the first time that I saw snow was exciting, because we come from a place that never has it. However, after a time, it isn't so beautiful.

Jordan: Hmm..and what was your first impression of Minnesotan culture? Generally speaking, how did Minnesotans receive you?

Citali: I had a good experience. I can speak poorly about my arrival here. Because the first persons that I met were Americans, a few Latinos, but Americans. And they helped me with the majority of things that I needed. They helped me to enlist Natalia in the school. A Latina helped me acquire a phone. They taught me where the hospital was. The Americans helped me. They also taught me to fill-up on gas. When I got to the gas pump, I had no idea what to do. They treated me very well. And I came to live in a very beautiful season. I moved during fun, summer activities. The weather was very beautiful --very similar to my own. It wasn't that difficult to adapt --for me or the children. That was also part of the reason that we decided to move when we did. Otherwise, we would have had to move in the in winter. And we are not used to such cold.

Jordan : What cultural differences did you notice? Between Mexico and the US.

Citali: We'll start with the fact that the streets here are clean. Concerning Morris, I can speak about it ---I know it. It could be that Minneapolis is more like other big cities in my country.

Jordan: OK.

Citali: But in Morris, there is a difference that isn't that wild --that the city is clean. Everything is in order. The cars are open in the summer. In the summer, bikes are left without locks on

them. In front of the houses, grass is perfectly cut. The cleanliness is the first thing one notices. This is the difference between a 1st world nation and a 3rd world country.

Jordan: Yes.

Citali: and with respect to the pedestrian, here people let you pass. In my city, no.

Jordan: Yes...in many parts of Latin America, it's like that.

Citali: Well...the road etiquette is much better here than it is in Mexico.

Jordan: When I've travelled through Latin America, I've noticed a major difference between Latin America and the US. Here, in my Minnesotan town, we never lock our doors. Never. Our cars and homes are always open, and just about anyone could go into my house and steal everything. But there's never been a problem with that, so we don't have anything to fear.

Citali: I think that the first difference was...when Mauricio, my son, had his first day of classes. Because he had to get on the public transit. I was told that there wasn't a school bus for the small children, because not all the children go on the same days, sometimes it's a schedule from 12 to 3. So, he had to use the public transit, with a children's ticket. There was another Latina girl --someone who worked with the children. So, I got on with Mauricio to sit him down etc.. and I got off. I followed the bus to see if he would get down. And she was outside, and when she saw me, because I had arrived before the transit, she began to laugh. Because here it is safe. You don't just put a 3 year-old on the bus in Latin America. Never. So, that for me was a big change. I was the only one to get on the bus with my child and to buckle him in. And when the transit arrived, I was there waiting to see if he'd get off. That's when I noticed that other children the same age also used the transit. That was something....

Jordan: Besides, from what I've experienced, in communities like these, the people look out for each other.

Jordan: If you could choose again, go to the past, would you have stayed in Mexico? If your husband, at the last moment, had secured a job in Mexico, would you have stayed?

Citali: I think so. Here, there is a good opportunity for our children to learn English. The methodology of the school here is very expensive to replicate in Mexico. And here it is a public school. But the difference is that you are in your country...in your language. Your people, your family. In difference, we don't have family here.

Jordan: Yes...well said. Ok, and what other positive aspects do you see in Morris?

Citali: It is very safe. The first thing is the safety. It is a clean place. Morris, well, the first perception, for me, is that when one first arrives, this is a village. For me, this was a village. But when you begin to see how the other towns are, you notice that this is a large city. It has all the services. We have a supermarket, we would like a WalMart, but well...it's what there is. There is a place to purchase food. We have a library. We have a place to fix your car. We have public transit. We have 3 pharmacies. The worst is that we don't have a 24-hour store. That is the bad part.

Jordan: OK...so, for your major/specialization/training how do you view the job market in your home town, compared with the job market in Morris? Speaking of your job, I assume that your husband does the same thing ---rather, he studied the same career?

Citali: The thing is, our career/specialization is very diverse. The availability of jobs was different for me than it was for him because of the specialization. But, I think that the job market here is pretty good because it comes with a work visa and a secured job. If we had to specifically search for a job here, it wouldn't be a good option.

Jordan: Yes...and after having graduated, was it very difficult to find a job in Mexico?

Citali: Um... no? It wasn't very difficult.

Jordan: OK...so..this company here in Morris offered you a fairly good, secure job.

Citali: Basically...for us, the decision came with the company in which my husband worked in Mexico--his company laid off many workers. So, it coincided that he was laid off. The company was 150, and they laid off 100. When you have a family and you need to support the family, this is your best option. You can't stay unemployed. So, that was the reason that we didn't hesitate to leave. Because he was earning the most.

Jordan: Speaking about the service learning opportunities ---like ESL etc.. what do you think?

Citali: I think that they are very good opportunities...and the people that take advantage of them do it.

Jordan: The programs offered by UMM?

Citali: Yes, I know all of them. All of them.

Jordan: I've seen you around here and there.

Citali: That's why I say it comes down to whether a person wants to or not. The integration of the Latinos in the community is personal, I think. If every person wants to integrate themselves into the community or not.

Citali: I, my library card ---I got it without speaking any English and in the summer. My children also did not speak any English. And the librarians...in that they couldn't understand us, looked for some papers which laid out the necessary steps to get the library card --in Spanish. They said, "Espera, espera... (Wait, wait)" Where they found the directions, I have no idea.

Jordan: very cool...and, have you been participating in ESL for a long while?

Citali: I believe that I've been going since when they first opened it. Hmmm...a year and a half?

Jordan: And your English? Has it gotten better?

Citali: Yes..yes, it's gotten much better.

Jordan: What do you think of the ESL system in the public schools?

Citali: The teacher that Natalia had, in her first year, helped her very much. And Natalia, in a single year, could speak and the teacher put her very high up in the program. My son didn't have to take a second year of ESL. That speaks to the ability of the teacher. When there are children that learn so quickly.

Jordan: Yes..hmm...It definitely is a complicated system. In my school system, I had a few peers that had come from Mexico when they were 10, 11 years old --and they came for various reasons. But they were never able to really grasp the language. They had a hard time trying to finish homework. Basically, these difficulties passed on to all of their other high school experiences. So, it's a complicated issue...but I think that it's important the program be well organized.

Citali: I think that it is very well organized. My daughter was in a bilingual kindergarten --in Mexico. When she arrived, she could read and write in Spanish. So, it wasn't too difficult for her to learn again. When we moved, I don't think she knew any English, even though she was in a bilingual kindergarten. The method of her teacher, Lynn Riser, was very good. And besides, she has a patience with them that really makes the difference. The children spend half the day with her and the other half they spend with the other children. I think that it is a good way of integrating the children.

Jordan: I noticed in my high school that most of the time the Latinos would stick together, all the time they'd be together. Some of them participated in extra-curriculars. I think that extra-curriculars are really important with respect to the "Minnesotan experience."

Citali: En Mexico they also have activities like that. They often have an extra cost, and it usually is up to the parents. I think that these are mostly personal problems, or the disposition of the culture...because the school has good programs. Natalia swims. Also, there is a program called the Zone, and it is very good. Both are in this program, it helps them with homework. It also sends sheets in Spanish so that I might be able to help them. Because, at the beginning it was complicated, sometimes I didn't understand 100%. And well...my daughter was the only Latina in the classroom. There were no other Latinos with whom she could spend time. And her first friend was an American girl whose mother was a teacher in the school. They helped us a lot.

Jordan: very well...

Citali: And after a while, we noticed that there was once a problem with the language. Some of the children were pestering her and it was the American girl that defended her.

Jordan: hmm

Citali: So...I think that this is a cultural question as well ---from the parents to the children. And the girl that pestered her, we realized what the reason was. Because, children repeat what they hear at home. But, no, we have never really had any problems. It is a question of culture, and with us ---that you say that you see Latinos walking down the street--is that we are temporary citizens. We are here legally with visas. This is the difference. There is a difference when you know that you can walk perfectly, in that you respect the laws of the US, you have no reason to be afraid. Nobody judges you. You can go to the school and let them know of your grievances, they're not going to deport you. I think that this opens the door for others.

Jordan: Yes...very well.

Citali: The programs are very good, they help. And you can go with your family, that is very important. You can go to all these programs with your children. Because very often the people don't go because of their children.

Jordan: Ok...which services do you use with the most frequency?

Citlali: hmm...La tienda, Willies, the pharmacy...the bank.

Jordan: which bank?

Citali: Um...Riverwood...the library.

Jordan: What is your opinion of these services? You already told me that there could be more resources, more services --but what do you think about the quality of service? Especially coming from a Latina's perspective.

Citali: I think that the services are very good. The only problem is that one would like to search to find the best price..and here that 's not possible. Another problem is that there is no 24-hour store. Let's say you have an emergency or something --well, there is no 24-hour store. When I first arrived, there was a 24 hour store and so the food prices were different..there was a better market. Now it's a monopoly.

Jordan: I'm a little curious, but do Latinos frequent the foods co-op? The natural foods store?

Citali: Ah...Pomme de Terre? Yes, I go. Well, I go with another friend because they have different things. But it is a little more expensive. So, we don't buy too many things. But we go because there are different things. And some things have a better price --cheaper than Willy's. But the people don't know ---like with almonds.

Jordan: Ok...perhaps you can answer this question. It seems like the majority of the Latinos go to Riverwood. Why is that?

Citali: Umm..I'm not sure why. The company has some kind of contract with Riverwood. The majority of accounts --Riverwood manages them. Our work account, debit account, they deposit into that account. And the credit that we have, for our car --it is also from them.

Jordan: What is the name of the company?

Citali: Riverview Farms

Jordan: Ok...yeah...I go the Bremer. It's most convenient for me to use Bremer with the college etc...

Citali: Yes, there are so many banks--for such a small town, it has a lot of banks.

Jordan: That's interesting.

Citali: Yes...it is.

Jordan: Well, I know that the university brings in a lot of capital, and spurs consumption.



Citali: Yes..it attracts a lot of investment...and it attracts...that the housing prices are ridiculous. The rents are very high thanks to the university. For a family, it is very expensive. For a single student, not so much --because you divide it in 5 or 6.

Jordan: Yes...for a Latino worker, it must be very expensive to bring a family here.

Citali: The rents basically are very high. Yes...there is a great difference between the rent in Morris and in Hancock.

Jordan: Yes, I'd imagine.

Citali: But...the difference is that this is a larger city --with all the services. For me, it is similar.

Jordan: ok..well to finish up here, since you've arrived, what changes have you seen in town?

Citali: hmm...I haven't seen many changes. The only one is that 24 hour store closed down. That is the only one that I've noticed.

Jordan: Ok..hmm...well, what changes would you like to see in the town?

Citali: There are many changes that could be good...but...basically...for me, this is vague question. There could be a larger supermarket. In reality, there is a population large enough for a large supermarket. That's the question no? Or...there could be better installations in the movie theatre. When I go, we are only 4 in the whole room. In reality there is a place and clients to have that...well.. I don't know. Little by little, they have remodeled it, cleaned it, painted it, and the selection of movies is a little better.

Jordan: Well, it is very expensive to maintain a theatre in a small town.

Jordan: Ok..at the end of all things, how would you classify your personal experience? With [the] your move to Morris. Are you thinking about continuing to live here?

Citali: Hmm..well our visa still has a few years left.

Jordan: So, you're going to stay at least until it expires.

Citali: At the least, yes. My experience has been very good. I had a good experience with the community. I was well received, I adapted well. I knew some very good people in the community that helped me...and for me...the university is a good option. With my children, I try to help in as many activities as I can --or that my activities allow me to better my community.

That my children build relationships in the town --that they enjoy the community and its services --its safety, cleanliness, culture, and because we have it. In the summer, the library has cultural activities. I went to the museum with them. And the people don't notice --we were the only Latinos on the bus...from the library because the people don't really notice that these programs exist. To get the people to go, more diffusion is needed --the programs that exist for the community in general. And that the people learn to enjoy this. Because living in Minnesota is spectacle of color. A summer...as if you were at the beach but with lakes, a fall that is very different --one we don't have--- and an extreme winter, but winter.

Jordan: We didn't have a winter this year! Ok...well...I guess we're out of time. Thank you very much!

41:55

**INTERVIEW WITH YURI MASCHOKOV  
MORRIS RESIDENT AND 2011 UMM GRADUATE  
INTERVIEWED BY CRISTINA MONTAÑEZ**

**Y- Yuri**

**C- Cristina**

**C:** So how long did you live in Morris before leaving?

**Y:** I moved here my freshman year in high school. So that was 2000...ah...2003 or 2004?

**C:** Somewhere around there.

**Y:** Anyway, I was here for eight and a half years. I ended up staying here for college so four years in high school and four years in college.

**C:** Why did you decide to stay here?

**Y:** It was a mix of financial reasons. My mom is here so I stayed with her. And I knew it was a good education, I didn't want to apply to any more schools. I just decided I'm staying here for four years and then after that I can be on my way. You know, leave without too much debt and get on into the world.

**C:** So then when you lived here in Morris how did you get involved with working with the Hispanic community? When did you take your first step towards that?

**Y:** Well I always...Windy was my high school teacher so I learned Spanish from her. I didn't really know too much about the Hispanic community. I mean I saw...throughout high school I didn't really know too much about it. Including my freshman year as well, I wasn't too involved. Sophomore year I began to kind of get to know people. I wanted to practice my Spanish and things like that. So I'd say hello to somebody or things like that, and I think that was around the time that we started the conversation table with Windy. And I got to know Juan Manuel and just a few other people. And so little by little I got a couple of friends. And Abe [Abram Henry] was doing his thing. Plan Amistad which was something I really wanted to do but really didn't commit to until he left. And then I got the job at Riverwood Bank where I was a Spanish speaker and that's where I really got pretty involved because I got to know everybody. Everybody was coming in with their banking needs. And what I would try to do was get to know people. And through that I kind of saw more of a need for me to get more involved. I tried to get more and more people to join the ESL program. And I saw a need for even more than that so I tried to get even more programs started.

**C:** You mentioned the Plan Amistad. Will you tell me a little more about that because I've never heard of it.

**Y:** Oh, that was Abe kind of doing things, I think with Stacey Aronson. They decided to just start this kind of tutoring program. Mostly because they saw the same issues. They saw these Hispanic residents that weren't reached out to and they didn't have many opportunities to meet people or have some place to go. So I think Abe, along with Katie Barron a little bit, it was mostly Abe that started this program. And they just had, I think five or 6 students, where you would teach them English and teach them more about culture and things like that. Abe, he really

got to know them and became friends with them. And they're, most of them are still in the ESL program and are still around. And then he [Abe] left for a semester and that's when I decided I really kind of wanted to pursue that and take over and I decided that I really wanted to make it grow too. Like I didn't want it to be just five or six students, I wanted it to be available to more people.

**C:** So was the Plan Amistad, was that kind of the beginning of ESL?

**Y:** I would say so yea. Because that grew into what it is now.

**C:** Into the actual program?

**Y:** Yea. At that time it was just him and five or six students, and it was all different levels. I don't know how he did it. And then I did it for a semester. You know, it was just me and a couple of other volunteers. But I was just...every level was in it. You had to kind of try and figure out how you were going to reach everybody that's on different levels and stuff.

**C:** So how did you first begin to reach out to people to come into the ESL program or to get involved? How did you first get people to get involved?

**Y:** My job at the bank was what really gave me that outlet to get to know people first of all and see that there was a need and then after that, you know, advertise, talk to people about it. See what they wanted. So it was kind of more...I guess I was looking for input and then after that it was easy for me to just put up a sign that said, you know, there's free ESL classes, there's no...I got to know people and I think there was a trust factor that was established. I think that was a big deal. People didn't want, you know, hidden agendas or anything like that. I think people just wanted just to go somewhere where they could have a good time and get to know people and also learn English as a result.

**C:** So when did you start working at Riverwood, right?

**Y:** Yep, Riverwood Bank.

**C:** When did you start working there?

**Y:** That was September of...senior year? In the fall.

**C:** In high school?

**Y:** No. In college.

**C:** Okay. So you didn't begin to get involved with this until later.

**Y:** I got involved during that summer before, as far as ESL classes go. I was planning for that...and then my senior year was when I really became involved.

**C:** What made you get a...why did you decide to get a job at the bank?

**Y:** I was away for the summer and Windy Roberts contacted me and said, "They're looking for a Spanish speaker and they asked me for a recommendation and I gave them your name." You know, I saw it as a great opportunity so I pursued it. I put in my application and talked to them. I

actually knew the boss, Doug Ehlers. His son went to high school with me so I had worked before with him so...I sat down with him and he told me what they were looking for and they gave me some flexibility to kind of become the community organizer that I became.

**C:** That's very cool. So what were your duties while you were there? Aside from...because you said community organizer, translator, but kind of overarching, what did you do?

**Y:** Well what they wanted was a Spanish speaker, somebody that could communicate, somebody who would make people comfortable, somebody who....I don't think they knew exactly where I was going to take it. I think they just saw it as, they need somebody that could translate and speak to people when needed. But I saw it as a big opportunity to become a voice, somebody who gets to know the community so that it can grow.

**C:** So what kinds of problems were they running into that they saw? Because obviously there was the language problem, that they couldn't communicate with others, but were there any other problems that the customers were running into aside from just a language barrier?

**Y:** I think comfort level was a big thing. I think going out around town, I don't think was comfortable for a lot of people. They didn't know anybody. I think they were getting...maybe some were getting looks, maybe some were, you know, seeing some resistance. But I think that's what was the biggest things, that there wasn't a comfort level that that [said] they were welcome. And I think that's kind of what we tried to, little by little, instill in people is that just a "Hello" does wonders. And I think little by little as they were learning English and getting more comfortable speaking to, you know, the "gringo" or whatever. I think things really progressed after that as far as comfort goes. And for me it was tough at the bank because people came in and they didn't...first of all they were in shock when I opened my mouth to speak Spanish. But also, it was kind of...it took a long time for me to gain that trust in them. So I can't imagine how it is for other people around the town.

**C:** What were some of the things that you led or got involved in with your community organizer position at the bank? Did you do any events or anything like that?

**Y:** At first I was really promoting the ESL classes, trying to get people to go to that. And then I also saw a need for something fun to do that's active. A lot of people love to play soccer, so I got together with Community Ed and we decided to offer a soccer program in the winter for when they can't play over at the ranch. And that became pretty popular as well.

**C:** Is that what Lazos ended up taking over?

**Y:** It's kind of a weird mix because, you know, Lazos was a group of people, and we were all kind of doing, working the community, so everything goes back to Lazos as something that we started. So you know it got supported by everybody. Eventually money came in from Lazos. We also got a donation from Riverwood, oh Riverview, excuse me, for the soccer league. They donated nets and some balls for us to start out.

**C:** So you've worked with Community Ed. What else have you worked with them with regarding the Hispanic community?

**Y:** With Community Ed?

C: Yea.

Y: Well they also had an ESL program. So they did reach out a couple of times to see, you know, what we were doing. And I did want to partner with them because they also needed support for their program. And we also did ESL training over there. And you went that one time. I don't know if it was offered there again this year or not. But, um, we partnered with them on that and they were willing to do that. I was in a meeting with a bunch of, it was like the head of police, the head of the hospital, the Otto-Bremer foundation and a bunch of other people, and I think there was a Community Ed representative there, and they were talking about the rise in students in the elementary school and high school of Hispanic origin, and kind of what they were doing as far as that goes.

C: When did you do that?

Y: That was right before I left. It was like in August I think. Because I think the Otto-Bremer foundation is looking into trying to help out with the Hispanic community.

C: Can you tell me a little about that meeting?

Y: That meeting was actually... It happened right before I was leaving. It was such a positive step, it felt. Getting so many of the, you know, head honchos together from Morris talking about, you know, one thing. You know, "how can we accommodate the Hispanic community better? Or what can we do to..." I don't want to say "accommodate" because I don't feel like they're in *need* too much, I don't know if they really want that many things, you know... But it's uh...you know, they talked about the schools. The head of police talked about the misconceptions that there were about the Hispanic community. And we got a chance to talk about what Lazos has done, there were a few members from Lazos there. And it was just a general... Riverview was there and they talked about, you know, the different visas that they give out and things like that. And I felt like it was just a very positive meeting. I don't know what happened after that, because I left shortly afterwards. It was kind of tough to leave, you know, when you get so many people listening to you when you've been reaching out for so long, it's hard to get people to listen. And then I left so...

C: So you said that it was...that it felt like a very positive step. So they recognized that there needed change, that it needed to be done. What were some of the specific things that like, say the hospital or the police department, the fire department, what were some of the specific things that they saw?

Y: Well the hospital was working on getting some more translators for them. It's actually very difficult to have translators at the hospital because you have to be certified in a very specific thing and then it's 24/7 that you need to be available. So it was very hard for them. So I think they use a calling service, which I didn't know about. The police, they talked about how they're actually learning Spanish themselves, they were taking classes, which I thought was pretty cool. They also talked about how there wasn't very much crime. At all. Like there's very, very minimal calls that they get from or for the Hispanics in the town, and how that was a very common misconception for a lot of people. I mean they were very, very pleased with the quality of people that we have in Morris. So, um, those were the...the fire department wasn't there.

C: No? I thought you'd mentioned that, sorry.

**Y:** But they also mentioned, the housing people were there. They were talking about how there's not much housing for these families.

**C:** Do you mean like realtors to sell houses or like apartments and renting units kind of thing?

**Y:** I think it was renting because they're not, most of them are not going to be buying houses because they're not here for long enough.

**C:** Oh ok.

**Y:** But they had complained because they, the houses, the apartments that they're getting, a lot of them are ex-college, you know...

**C:** Oh....

**Y:** So they're....they're not... They want to be living in a clean environment.

**C:** Liveable house?

**Y:** Liveable house. And they can't find that so that was something that was discusses and they were working with Riverview as far as trying to figure out how to resolve that situation.

**C:** That's very interesting because I never heard of this meeting. I guess I've been here and I haven't heard...

**Y:** And I was surprised that there were no newspapers there to kind of, you know, do a story on it or anything like that so that was... On one hand it was a very positive thing but on the other hand it didn't get very much publicity. You know, it was a big deal to have that many, uh,

**C:** Big people?

**Y:** Big people there.

**C:** Was it like an open forum?

**Y:** It was... People were invited and it was done through the Otto-Bremer people. I think Holly Witt was the one that really organized it. She was the one that invited me.

**C:** Wow. That's really cool. So I guess just in general, how was your experience, from the beginning, with the Hispanic community, kind of like going to the conversation table and at first just getting to meet people, and then how did it change throughout the time that you were here?

**Y:** You know at first I was just trying to build some friendships, I guess. I think it was kind of selfishly to learn Spanish because I'd just gotten back from Spain and I was looking for an outlet to practice. But as time went on I got more and more passionate about finding some way that I could make a positive change in Morris and that kind of consumed my life for a good year, year and a half. I was very involved and I couldn't really stop. You know, it was my senior year too so I was running around trying to do senior seminars, I was working at the banks, I was teaching English classes. And people were telling me that I was crazy but I couldn't really stop because I was very passionate about it. You know, it went from selfishly trying to learn Spanish and at the end of it, well within a couple of months, I really wanted to help these people.

C: What kinds of attitudes did you come across?

Y: \*\*laughs\*\*

C: Because, I know you mentioned this a bit earlier when you said that people would go to the bank and people would kind of just look at you like, “you know Spanish?” So what kind of attitudes did you come across from both angles? The Hispanic community and then kind of how the community at large was viewing what you were doing?

Y: Um, like I said it took me a little while to kind of gain trust from a lot of the Hispanic community. I think a lot of people didn’t really know why I was doing what I was doing, why I was trying to help. You know, “Who is this guy trying to help us out? We don’t even know him really.” You know, I think after a while... I only have the best of intentions and I think that kind of showed after a while because I didn’t have any hidden agendas or anything. I just wanted to get to know them and help them out. So I think that eventually people started talking saying, “he’s actually trying to help out and he’s not trying to do anything other than that.” So I think that helps as far as the trust factor. And then just word spreads because they’re all working together eventually there were people that were coming up to me that I hadn’t met yet and they were like, “oh I’ve heard so much about you.” Blah, blah, blah. And then I think at the bank I was, people would come in just to talk, which I thought was great. People, I think, need that- a friendship outside of the usual things that they were doing out there with the same people. So they just came in. I would have long conversations, lines piling up, and I didn’t really care. I was there for them, to listen. And then as far as the community goes, I got mixed feelings from a lot of people. Most of the time when I would go out to like QTs or something like that a lot of the Hispanics would be there and I’d be right there with them. And I know I got dirty glances and things like that from a lot of the townspeople. You know, that’s just something that I dealt with, and I got in quite a few arguments with locals. You know, them not knowing why I’m helping these people and you know all these other things. So there was negativity and there was also a lot of positivity. We threw that event at the, the Cinco de Mayo event at the American Legion and I was amazed by how many people showed up. And that really, it was kind of a powerful thing for me, that so many people came out to support. We titled it, “Come Celebrate Our Community” and people came out to celebrate their community. I thought that was great.

C: I remember attending that and there was a lot of people there. I had to wait to be seated so it was really nice.

Y: Yea, we ran out of food at like 6:30, an hour into it and I was like, “Oh boy...” But it was great. It was great to see that things have really grown, coming back to visit, they’ve only gotten better I feel like. Or at least grown, I don’t know about how much better things are but things have really grown. And I see a lot of improvements actually.

C: What kind of improvements have you noticed? Or actually, let me rephrase that. What wasn’t there before that you see now?

Y: I think so many more people are involved, especially at the university. I mean, they threw this event at the Common Cup, “Get to Know Yourself...” No, “Celebrate Where You Are and Where You’ve Been.” I saw so many students involved. Jane Addams, that came out as I was leaving and I didn’t know if it was going to be successful or not, but it became a huge success.



As more and more people get involved, it'll just keep growing. And now they have four levels at the ESL program, they have books, and they're organized, and all these other things that we weren't when I was there. I was trying to get that [ESL] to there... But, you know, people have really taken it to the next level, which is great to see. You know, it's tough to come back and then leave again when things are going so well.

**C:** What kind of attitudes did you come across with the people that you socialized with, that you became friends with, towards the community at large?

**Y:** I think it was mixed, a lot of it. Some people, you know, I heard quite a few horror stories of, you know, blatant racism, you know, things like that. That's very hard to hear. But some people, they say that a lot of the community members are the most friendly people that they've seen, you know that it's that Minnesota nice shining through, you know, smiles and trying to be nice and helpful. A lot of people can't speak English very well and I think it really makes a difference if somebody at the counter, you know, when they're trying to buy something is either actively trying to help them or is just being annoyed that they can't speak English. I think there's a huge difference and, you know, I think they found the people that they're comfortable with and that are going to listen to them and try to work with them as they try to work out what they need to do, you know, while they're out in the town. So you know, it's... Obviously it's tough for these people coming into a new place and trying to integrate in and do the day to day things. But um...yea... Like I said, it's a mixed bag.

**C:** So I guess you haven't been here for nearly a year now, but from when you left and your experiences before, what were some of the positive aspects that Morris offered to a Hispanic newcomer, to someone that maybe had that language barrier? What're some of the positive aspects that you saw that the community was able to offer them?

**Y:** Do you mean just out of like the programs and things or just as a community, Morris?

**C:** Everything in general.

**Y:** What was different about Morris? What made Morris special? Is that what you're...?

**C:** Kind of, yea.

**Y:** I think the university is a big thing. As more and more students get involved I can see that being a very positive relationship that is forged between, you know, the Hispanic community and the university. And you know at the university there's professors and things like that and they know community members, so everybody is kind of, it's a channel that it goes through but I think everybody can get the message across. So I think that's the dynamic of having the university and the community and the Hispanic community. We always, as we formed Lazos, we talked about that there's three main groups within Morris- and that's the Hispanic community, the university and the locals, or the local community. And, you know, we were always trying to get those three groups together. I think as time goes on it'll be easier and easier to try to get those three groups together. So I think that would be... I think the university is very key. As they become more and more supportive of the programs that are going on, and the schools too, the public schools, the high school and the elementary school. I think those are the three that are really important as far as all this work goes.

**C:** The public schools, I've talked to some people and we're getting more help with the ESL programs for the children and stuff because we're getting more families.

**Y:** Aha.

**C:** So I guess, is that a trend that you noticed? I know you were only here for about a year that you were worked with them but, did you notice a trend in the people that when you first got involved, what kind of people you were meeting and towards the end what kind of people you were meeting? Were they always, you know, were they people that were family members, were they just single men, single women? What kind of mix did you see?

**Y:** As far as the Hispanic community?

**C:** Aha.

**Y:** The thing was that it was all just kind of thrown at me at once when I was working at the bank. I didn't really know how many families there were. I had no idea that there were that many families and moms, you know, while the guys, the men are working, the moms are around town trying to do day to day things. And those were the people that I saw most at the bank. And then on pay days, which were crazy days. Because we would have them all come in to the bank cashing their, you know, their huge checks, well not huge, but you know, it's a lot of cash to be handing out throughout the day because we would get hundreds of checks. So those were the, we called them Dairy Fridays and we would always have full tellers. But that's when you would see a lot of the single males. So I didn't have as much time to get to know them as I did the families. But I did forge a lot of friendships with a lot of those guys too. I think that was the biggest demographic I grew as far as ESL classes, that I really tried to reach out to. Because the mothers really, they had the ambition and the time to do these kinds of things. But the guys, you know, they're working 12 hours a day, 6 days a week, so it's harder for them. I shouldn't say that because obviously mothers do a lot too, but for these guys to leave work shower and then get somewhere and try to learn, I think that was a harder sell. So that's the people that I was really trying to get to go because those are the people that I think could fall into a pattern of just going to work and going to sleep and not really taking time for themselves. Which I felt like this was doing. They were doing something out of the ordinary- trying to learn, trying to...they're forging friendships, it's a lot more positive for them. I would see a lot of them being very tired, very stressed and very depressed, and think that that and the soccer were bright spots for them in their weeks.

**C:** So at first when you got involved with ESL you saw a lot more females, female students, and then towards the end is when you started seeing more male students, or kind of a mix?

**Y:** Yea, it was kind of a mix at first. You know we had Abe's group, all of them transferred over to, and that was about half and half. But as it grew, obviously there's more guys than there are females, so that seemed to grow a lot faster.

**C:** Seems like you've had quite the experience.

**Y:** Yep. Yep that's true.

C: Is there anything else you'd like to get on tape or you'd like to tell me? I mean I'm sure that we could talk about this for hours, but...

Y: I mean it was a very important time in my life where I realized I could make a difference and I think that's very important for people to realize. And I think as more and more people get involved with these kinds of things I think it'll have an impact on all their lives too. And really, especially in a small town like this, you can make a difference, and get out and do something that you're passionate about and see things change in a positive way in a shorter amount of time than you would anywhere else. And so, it was very positive for me. And it's also very hard to come back and see everybody and then have to leave again because I forged a lot of very good friendships while I was doing all this work so.

C: Have you ever thought about coming back? Or are you pleased that you started it and it took off?

Y: My whole goal from the beginning was trying to make it self-sustainable so that I could leave because that I knew that I had other plans rather than staying here. But for a while I was actually...before I left I was thinking about starting my own business here and sticking around. And I got offered a job at the bank do more stuff even here and in Benson. Benson also has a big...not Benson itself but further out that way they have more dairies, which is exactly the same system as this.

C: The satellite dairies from here?

Y: Yep. And they wanted me to get involved with that Hispanic community and I just think it was another challenge, but I was maybe going to do that. But you know, I think I made the right decision for myself and you know things have been self-sustaining and it has grown.

C: You can look back at it and smile.

Y: Aha. I was tearing up actually here at the Common Cup event and you know, seeing people again, it's very emotional, but it's very good to see.

C: That's awesome. I wish I would've been able to make it to that event. I had a track meet.

Y: The harp player was amazing. They had a harp player from Paraguay.

C: Oh, my gosh. Now I'm really jealous I missed it.

Y: It was beautiful.

C: Awesome. Well, I think that's it. Thank you for your time.

Y: Yea. Thank you.

**INTERVIEW WITH CINDY PERKINS  
DIRECTOR OF MORRIS COMMUNITY EDUCATION  
INTERVIEWED BY CRISTINA MONTAÑEZ**

**C:** Cristina

**P:** Cindy Perkins

**C:** Good afternoon, my name's Cristina. Can I have you please state your name and tell me a little bit about where you're from and how long you've lived here in Morris.

**P:** Sure. My name is Cindy Perkins and I have lived in Morris about, since 1979. So that's about 33 years. Yes. And I lived here, raised a family here. I have four grown children and they all went through the Morris area school system. I originally was born and grew up on a farm in central Minnesota in the Hutchinson area. And when I graduated from high school, I went on to college. I spent two years in Marshall, Minnesota and then two years in Mankato, Minnesota. Finished up there, graduated in 1979 and then came to Morris straight from there. I have a degree in recreation and community education. And that's what brought me to Morris. There was an opening for coordinator position, primarily doing their recreation, which I had a passion for, an interest in, I've always liked sports but wanted to do it more on the recreational side as opposed to being a teacher, a Phy Ed, teacher and doing it that way. It just worked out really well for me. And I got the job here, started out, as I said, as a coordinator. Then in about 1980, I don't even know, mid 80s, '84, '85, something like that, the Community Ed director resigned and moved on so I applied for the position and I got that position. So I've been doing that ever since.

**C:** So you kind of came here out of a stroke of luck.

**P:** Yes, exactly. Went out for an opening and a position, and found it to be a very comfortable, nice community. Met my first husband here and got married. He was a hometown boy. We had two sons then that marriage ended. I got remarried to someone else that came here for a position at the school and he had two children, and his children came to live with us and so we raised four children here in Morris. They were all very active in school and uh, yea, that's all. That's kind of my story, a little bit I guess.

**C:** All right. So tell me a little bit about your work. Kind of first where you started, because you started as a recreation coordinator, so tell me a little bit about that. And then once you moved into being a director, kind of what you did there.

**P:** Being a rec coordinator I was pretty much responsible for setting up a lot of the programs that we ran for adults as well as youth. So a lot of heavy use in the summer, setting up t-ball and softball and playground programs and at the beginning, back in the late 70s, early 80s the program was nothing like what it is now. I mean, I just take a look at what we offer now compared to what we offered then and it's just amazing how much it has grown. Like I said, in the summer it's primarily t-ball during the day then we had elementary softball and that was during the day. Kids would just come, I'd hire staff and they'd work with the girls. And then during the school year, we ran a little bit of activity after school. We had a soccer program when I first came and again, that was driven by a parent who really wanted to see soccer get up and going, so a lot of volunteer involvement there. He actually coordinated that program for me. We had volleyball leagues for adults. Those kind of highlight how things started out. And then we did a lot of enrichment classes too that I would set up and coordinate some after school activities

for kids. You know probably two or three different things a quarter. And I'm responsible for the brochure or newsletter, whatever you want to call it, the publication we would send out to people to know what our offerings were. When I first came that was, like, 4 pages; it was a cover, inside, inside, back cover. And now it's like 64 pages sometimes.

**C:** It's a book now!

**P:** Yes, yes a book. So things have really changed. And then, like I said, in the early 80s, mid 80s, our Community Ed director moved on to a different position and I applied for that position and was fortunate enough to get hired and then from there, then my responsibilities changed to more administrative and it gave me more control over being able to expand what Community Ed was going to look like. And at that time there were a lot of new things coming down the pipe too from the state department of education because community education is funded by the state of Minnesota in Minnesota. We get money just like the school gets money to operate their schools or to operate their food service or to operate their buses, transportation. The school also gets dollars, they levy for local tax dollars and then we get state aid and that money comes into what's called Fund Four. So that money can only be used for community education, schools can't use it to pay for new buses or pay for teachers or whatever. It's a designated fund that has to be used for community education programming. And then in the 80s, that's when the state said, "we want to see early childhood programs expand." And so they gave us additional funding so that we could start doing ECP classes, parent-child classes, and so we started that program here. And then a number of years later there was requests by parents to try to do afterschool child-care. We weren't in the business of doing that, so again we put together an advisory committee and we started an afterschool program. And through all of that we just saw an interest in wanting to provide more and more types of enrichment and recreational opportunities and that's where then we started doing things more with basketball and, like I said, the soccer continued but now we weren't just doing fall soccer, we were doing fall soccer and spring soccer, and so...and we were getting into volleyball. And it just continued to expand, primarily focusing on elementary aged kids because, once again, when they got to junior high there were junior high sports for the kids to participate in. And still knowing that not all kids play sports, also being able to provide those enrichment opportunities and programs: painting and drawing and play. And, you know, just all kinds of programs too for kids. You know foreign language classes, we'd offer Spanish classes, we'd offer French, we'd do cooking classes for adults and kids. So again, with community education the state also says if you're going to have a Community Ed program that you also have to have an advisory council and that advisory council has to meet a certain number of times per year. And the reason for that is because they are people from your community. So when they come they are kind of your eyes and your ears, they tell you what they're hearing out there from parents and other people in the community that they would like to see community ed offer. So then the advisory council kind of directs me in what direction I should go, lets me know I could improve. We do evaluations of how we could improve the whole program and all those kinds of things. I would say over the last ten years or so, eight to ten years, we've really seen an increase in types of collaborations and cooperation we're doing with other businesses and with service organizations. Again, sometimes I think community education has that reputation for, "if I don't know where else to go, I'll go there first," because even though it may not be something that we can do, we can point them in a direction of where they can go. When I first started off we had a staff of two, the Community Ed director and myself, so I was kind of like an office manager too, so I had a lot of the clerical responsibilities, and of course,

there weren't much for computers back then either. It just was really different. And now we have, our staff has just grown. I have a full time office manager and a program coordinator, and myself, and service learning, and early childhood preschool program. You know, we have a whole center now for preschool, where before we had to beg, borrow and find classroom space that we could use. When we were in the other building, we would have offsite. You know, I had preschool classes in the senior center or I'd have preschool classes in Donnelly or wherever I could find a place that was available to teach those classes. And every year it felt like I was hiring new preschool teachers. The program has grown so much now that we actually have two classrooms that are preschool classrooms. Just like there are kindergarten classrooms, there are preschool classrooms. And my preschool teachers are hired and Diane has been with us for years teaching preschool. And I actually have a coordinator now, so it's not my responsibility to pretty much put together those childhood programs, it's the coordinators responsibility. Things have just changed and grown and our budget has grown. And yea, it's great! And like I said, I really like being able to kind of be problem solvers too. Again, I think one of the things we're really proud of is saying with the Hispanic population, we've got a lot of Hispanics coming into the community. What can we be doing for those families? And then you know, sitting down and...our bilingual preschool is a great example of how do we help those families to become comfortable, wanting to come into our school, and feel welcome into our school and not afraid. And how to we work with that whole language barrier? So I think there are lots of things that we can continue to do but we've done a pretty good job of listening to what people are telling us and then trying to meet those needs. And what I like about our bilingual program is preschool program is a fact that classroom has...if we had 10 kids or 12 kids in the class, we try to have preschoolers who's native language is English and preschoolers who's native language is Spanish. And then we have an English speaking teacher and a Spanish, a bilingual para[educator]. So the para[educator] in the class speaks both Spanish and English.

**C:** So the kids are...so there's both kids.

**P:** There's both kids, native. So what we try to do is not a class where you're going to come in and we're going to teach you English or we're going to teach you Spanish. During the course of the two or three hours you are there, sometimes we're going to sing a song in Spanish, sometimes we're going to sing a song in English, sometimes we're going to read a story in Spanish, sometimes we're going to read a story in English. So the kids are hearing throughout the day, both languages all the time. Because the research shows that they're going to pick up on that, they just got to hear it. You know? So in the room there are signs everywhere, by the chair, "this is the word chair" in English and "this is the word chair" in Spanish. "This is the word bathroom", you know whatever, "this is the color red." So the kids are seeing both languages too. And we're really seeing that those kids are picking up on both languages. And I think for the parents too, of the English speakers and the Spanish speakers are seeing that too with their children. And it's been good for them as well. That's been a really successful program. And like I said, the big thing is that we're not having a time where...they're just doing both languages.

**C:** That's really awesome.

**P:** It really is, really, really cool.

**C:** So it seems like Community Ed was really one of the first organizations to work with the Hispanic community and to kind of welcome them here. And you've told me a little bit about the

bilingual preschool. So what other initiatives did you take? What were some of the first initiatives that you took to...

**P:** I think that we also...the big thing is our English as a second language tutoring program. So we've been involved with adults. We have what's called Adult Basic Ed. And it meets on Wednesday evenings. Well again, we're working with, we collaborate with Alexandria Community Education because they oversee a consortium of adult basic ed programs and Morris is just one of those. And so we were working with them and we started out where we kind of, we just had a few that needed to learn, work on their English and so we were finding tutors that were working with them. Then when La Tienda opened we sat down again and tried to see if there was some way we could work with La Tienda to do some programming there. At one time they actually had taken and they cleared up a room above the store there and we had computers up there and we were actually trying to have a class up there for them to teach them English. So not so much one on one but, actually a class setting instead. And that worked pretty good, but then the numbers dwindled off, so we went back to the board and said, "well maybe there's something different we should be doing." And we looked at providing the same kind of programming, and it seemed like it was working better at the school. So that program has just grown. So Sal, I don't know if you know Sal, he's just a godsend. And he is just such a go getter and such an advocate and has made all of us, I think, better advocates also, and that's been really cool because he is out there. And he is going out to the businesses that employ, the dairies and the swine operation, and he's sitting with those people that are running those businesses and letting them know what we're doing, how can we help and been really involved on campus, and trying to get something going on campus. And then from what he hears from the organizations that he's worked with, he brings that information back to us and then how can we, how can we fit in, what can we be doing? And, you need to come up to the school on a Wednesday evening. It is amazing. Because we have people coming in, that's the night the classes meet, so we have people coming in on Wednesday night that are working on their English skills. And they might be Hispanic, their native language might be Spanish, their native language might be Russian, their native language might be Chinese. We've got a number of the Chinese students come over to get help with their English. In addition to that we've got just a number of adults from the community that never graduated from high school, so they're working on trying to get their GED, we might have somebody who's trying to work on citizenship. We might have somebody who's been out of school for a number of years and now they're going to go back to college and they just need help brushing up on how to write or how to do algebra or whatever. So the needs of the people that come on any given Wednesday are just across the boards. And then of course we've done these, we've had the Minnesota Literacy Council come in now and working again and the collaboration I have now and the partnership I have now with Argie [Manolis] has really helped us as well. So we've been able to bring the Minnesota Literacy Council in, they came in the fall and then again in the winter. I think we had about 30, between university students and community members that got trained in ESL tutoring. So they actually went through a two day training to learn how to help other people that come in and want to learn English. So we've got, you know what's going on on campus and what we've got going on. And what's been really cool is that up until this fall, we were doing our thing and university was doing their thing and we didn't know what each other was doing. So, I'm not sure how, but I think it was when Argie asked to host the training this fall, I said, "Argie we need to sit down and talk about what you're doing and you need to know what we're doing and how do we get the word out to the Latino community about all the different offerings we have." They can come on Wednesday, they can come on Monday, they

can come on Thursday. And then the question came up and now we have issues with how do we deal with their children. Because a lot of times they want to bring, they need to bring their children with because they don't have childcare. So we, you know, then again worked through that and I went back to my consortium and said, "you know, we have a real need for childcare. Can we find some dollars to help?" Then we actually went to our school foundation and got a grant from our school foundation. And I was actually able to hire, she actually was student teaching with Jody Snow in the high school, so she's bilingual. I hired her and she was coming on Wednesday nights and she was doing instruction with the kids. So it wasn't just babysitting, she actually had lesson plans, she was working with those kids. And also there might be older students that were in school and they had to have a science fair project. Well mom and dad just struggled to even understand what a science fair project is, you know. So she would try to help that student work on their science fair project or whatever it might be. So again, trying to meet the needs of those kids and again. Then as the conversation went on we started talking about, okay, next fall we plan on doing, and you got to stop me from rattling on too much. But next year, I was telling you about our bilingual program that we have, preschool. Well what we're going to do next year is we're actually going to assign one of our bilingual preschool teachers to teach on Wednesday nights. So it will be structured. So mom and dad, or mom, or dad can come on Wednesday and get help with their English and then their preschooler is actually going to go to preschool on Wednesday nights. And I will have a teacher there and I will have paras there and it will just be a set up class.

**C:** And that's something that's kind of in the works right now?

**P:** Yes it's something we hope to start next fall.

**C:** So I have a question about... you're doing a lot of work with the preschool and a lot of work with adults, so there's on both ends. Now what about all the kids in the middle?

**P:** What we're starting to do is, and we need to do more of this and I actually had a teacher bring it to my attention. We have you know I think the kids in the middle, we have a lot of programs. Okay, so we have The Zone, which is afterschool for school age kids. So we have kids coming to that. And again, we have university students that come over and they're what are called tutors and they're helping kids with their homework.

**C:** Is that TREC?

**P:** That's with TREC. So again, if we some Hispanic school age kid coming and need help with their homework, or need help understanding English, we're trying to meet the needs of where they're at so we're trying to assign tutors for those kids. So they're getting some extra additional help because our ESL teacher in the school now is just swamped. Her case load is just...there's just too many kids. And I think the school may consider hiring another person, but we're trying to help her. And so we're going to her and saying, "we've got these kids coming after school, how can we be helping you?" So again, just trying to keep that communication open and trying to work together. A lot of the kids just come to our afterschool programs too. So we've had kids in the fall that have been in soccer, we've had kids that are coming in in basketball. And so the biggest thing was that these kids want to participate and we started doing some, and we're going to try to do more, is that we send home, we always send home a flyer, like when our new programs start, like now for summer, this is what we've got going on for summer. Well, we need



to also get someone to translate that flyer into Spanish because I'm thinking a lot of times these kids aren't participating, not because they don't want to, but because the flyer came home and mom and dad can't read the flyer and don't know what we're trying to say. So if they can see that we've got t-ball going on and we've got golf lessons or gymnastics, or whatever it might be, track, that these kids would tend to hopefully participate in the programs. And again, the kids working with...again, it's just like the preschool. You've got English speaking and Spanish speaking, that their Spanish is going to, the English kids' Spanish might get better and the Spanish kids hopefully in being with the English kids, their English is going to get better. Sometimes, right now, I think the barrier is, that we...that they don't know what we have to offer because the flyers all come home in English.

**C:** And that was actually my next question, like, how well do you see Morris equipped to welcome new coming families that might have a language barrier? And it sounds like there's lots of activities but there's still that language barrier that needs to be crossed.

**P:** In our brochure now we do have information in there about, for instance, that we do offer English as a second language programs. That's in the brochure in both English, and on that page it's both in English and in Spanish. So that if they see that, they can read that. With our preschool programs we do right now, that's translated into Spanish. Registration forms to sign up for classes we have both English and Spanish of that. Scholarship forms, if they can't afford to pay for classes and need assistance, we've done a few, few reduction applications, we've got those both in English and in Spanish. We're starting to do some things but I see that there's more we could be doing. In our preschool area, we have... when you come into our school Community Ed is the first area that you see. So we have a bulletin board there, and we have things on there, and it's actually just for our Spanish club or Spanish 2 students take care of that bulletin board and put things up in there just to make community aware of like if there's a holiday coming up. A Mexican holiday or whatever it might be, or anything like that. I think this month's bulletin board is highlighting singers, because I just remember seeing Christina Aguilera on there and, I'm trying to think of some of the others. The real famous one that got murdered?

**C:** Selena?

**P:** Yea! I love her music! You know, and just highlighting too. Again, just to bring a cultural awareness piece to our community and enrich all of us about that. And same thing, about why are these holidays important? Or you know, the Hispanic population? I can't think of some of the holidays that they highlighted but... So trying again to just make them at least when they come into the school, feel a little bit more welcome. I know that we have some moms that volunteer in the school, so that if we have a new family come in, or someone that doesn't speak English, so there is somebody that we can probably get a hold of during the day in the school building and they can come over and translate for us. So again, helping to bridge that a little bit. So I know the school has on their voicemail, I do believe they have a line that you can push and it's in Spanish, so that you can, you know, again, get some information that way.

**C:** And then you mentioned a reduction form or scholarships. What do those cover? Are those like afterschool programs?

**P:** Yep. Preschool programs, afterschool programs, all programs we have for kids.

**C:** All right. And then this is a little bit on the side, but still dealing with that organizations or businesses around town have you partnered with to either provide some of the services or to kind of bring up maybe topics that you think might be important? Who have you partnered with and you know, what has been the conversation?

**P:** Just the ones I think I mentioned earlier. We've worked in cooperation with La Tienda. And the big thing is working now with Argie and the university. We have also...I haven't had conversations aside from what Sal has done with the dairies, but it's kind of on my to do list to have a conversation with them, again, because they do employ so many. Are there things that we could be doing to help them? Are there things we could be doing on site? Or, I don't know. I think that's a business that we need to have a conversation with. Let's see. I know that we have had different businesses like banks and the chamber and places like that that have called and asked us if we would be willing to, if we could find someone and have... we've had a couple of adult Spanish classes as a result. People that work front line at the banks and front line at other businesses that, or the hospital, there are just certain things that, we actually have a doctor that came to one who wanted to make sure that that language barrier wasn't there. Trying to learn that too.

**C:** So people were learning Spanish?

**P:** Yes. So we would teach adult Spanish classes. And like I said, I would have people from banks that would come to the class. And we actually set one up for our staff and Jody taught that afterschool so our office managers could come and learn some of the key things that they would need to, and words and phrases that they would need to know, if, again, a family came in, and they could at least hear some of the words and be able to understand what it is that some of them are asking for. So we've done that a little bit at the school. Think... I think that's probably about it.

**C:** So you said, the hospital came, they sent a doctor to do that. Have you had any like people from the police department who also may need to learn Spanish or any from any other business?

**P:** No. No, we haven't. And so I don't know if they're just trying to get by or if they, and then again, I haven't had this conversation. I did have the police department come in, and this was a really cool class! We had the police department come in this winter and they did a winter survival class. And what they did was a police officer came in and just talked to, because so many of them come from a country where there's no winter, there's no snow, there's no ice, there's no snow emergency. So he came in and just talked about those things. What is a snow emergency? What does it mean...and he was bilingual also, the police officer. So what does it mean when there's a snow emergency? That you have to get your car.... You know, so they could understand those things and where do I go? And this is the website you can go to so that you know that when it's snowing really hard if it's a snow emergency or if it's not. When you get in your vehicle and it's icy, this is how you want to slow down, this is how you want to apply your breaks, this is what to do if you get into a skid, how to straighten out of it. And I think they actually went into the parking lot and practiced.

**C:** And that was this last winter?

**P:** That was this last winter. And it actually was on one of the days that we actually had snow. It just, it was perfect timing. Because we thought about that, “how are we going to show them any of this? We haven’t had any snow this winter!” and then it happened to snow that day. So that was really good, and they really appreciated that. And Sal was actually there too, he was... it was cool.

**C:** Was that hosted through Community Ed and how did you advertise for that? How did you get people to come?

**P:** We had it in our brochure and that was a class that I did have Jody translate into Spanish and it was in our brochure in Spanish as well.

**C:** And this is Jody Snow?

**P:** Yes. And then I sent flyers home with Tom P????? who teaches my ESL classes. So prior to the class starting, a couple of weeks before that I sent flyers home with the Wednesday evening group too to let them know. And then word of mouth.

**C:** Very cool. In your opinion, in addition to everything you’ve already told me. What are some of the positive aspects that the city of Morris or Stevens county has to offer based off of services activities, and whether they are community engagement activities, do they have to offer newcomers, whether they be Hispanic, into this community?

**P:** You know, you probably know more about that than I do! I know that the chamber does an event more geared for students in the fall, to welcome them. I’m not sure what kinds of events are geared just for that purpose. I think that myself and Community Ed have more things that we could probably, the other big thing that we have going on is “how do I spin off of this and how do I take this group and are there other things they want to do?” We do adult soccer in the winter on Wednesday evenings.

**C:** Oh my gosh. It’s all on Wednesdays.

**P:** Fifty. There were fifty men there on Wednesday nights playing. And it’s so cool because they like to play with the little tiny soccer balls and they are so good! And actually, it was kind of cool because there are UMM students that came over and played with them too. And they were just wowed by their ability. And again it turned out almost like a family event because a couple times I came out and watched and their wives and kids would kind of come and sit in the bleachers and watch them play. And we had like three different sets of nets for them to play on and they’d come from 7-9 I think. Just for a couple of hours and just play soccer, like I said, there were fifty of them. Now I was just visiting with Robert and Hilda.

**C:** Robert Frischmon?

**P:** Yep.

**C:** And Hilda Ladner?

**P:** Yes. About continuing doing something, moving it outdoors for the summer. We want to see what we can set up for the summer. But again, just trying to find those avenues and activities that they really enjoy doing. Then you know, how do we find a way... you know last year we had the

soccer too and we had some community members come but they were like, “I can’t compete with these guys! It’s dangerous! They’re so good!” but others and things. And I just actually met with Robert and Hilda and they’re trying... what was the name of their group?

**C:** Lazos?

**P:** Lazos, yes. So that to me, in my mind I’m going to sit down and continue to have conversations with Lazos because how can I collaborate with that organization to be doing things and to be helping them to promote activities that they’re trying to do? Because it seems that that’s the mission of that group is to find ways to welcome people and welcome into our community and have events. It seems they were trying to do some sort of... they just had an event or were just planning an event that was coming up. Is it around 5 de Mayo?

**C:** Last year was a cinco de mayo event. This year it’s the journey of the monarch butterfly. And they did that to welcome spring, it was last Friday.

**P:** Okay, but are there more...see because then again, that’s one of those things that with their heritage and... how do we... so how was that? Was it well attended?

**C:** Yes.

**P:** And were there community members there as well?

**C:** Yes.

**P:** Great. So again continuing to do those things and like I said just appreciating having that other culture in our community and learning from that.

**C:** Did Community Ed partner with the school and the student orgs to do the cinco de mayo last year?

**P:** Yea with the school.

**C:** And then this year...

**P:** Yea I think this is our third year, I think, of doing it. And Jody Snow’s Spanish students pretty much organize that. And then they come over into the elementary school and they have different booths and activities that we set up in the foyer hall way area and then classrooms come and so all the kids are involved in it and at certain times of the day a classroom will come down and then they’ll go outside and play soccer they may do some face painting and she’s got all different kinds of activities.

**C:** And that’s at the high school correct?

**P:** But the event is at the elementary and the high school kids run the event.

**C:** Okay, that one’s a different one then. Yea that’s um...I haven’t actually heard about that one but I was talking about the one that we had at the Legion.

**P:** Oh!

**C:** Yea, that one was a Cinco de Mayo last year.

**P:** Okay, okay.

**C:** Oh, so these are two... that's really cool because I didn't know that we had two separate events that did this.

**P:** Jody does something with her high school students. They come down and actually educate and work with the elementary kids and preschool kids and they take part in the event. It's a day long thing. So they come and they decorate the night before the hall ways. They'll have the flags up and, I don't know, streamers and all the colors. It's really cool looking. It's really fun they have a good time.

**C:** That's awesome. And my next question is a bit double barreled, so: what kind of attitudes have you been met with, both in the Hispanic community, like how have you been met with them and with the locals here in Morris as well as to what you're doing is it good? Is it perceived well?

**P:** I think for the most part its perceived well. Sometimes you get those people that think, "well why are we doing that for this group and we're not doing it for this group?" So there's that too because we have more than just Hispanics coming into our community. So you know, we hear some of that. And then you also hear just... you hear some negative about... well some people think they just come in and ruin everything. You know, you have that. And well...no! You need to think about that there are people in your community that are ruining your community too. But there's just, the prejudice and I don't know how you get past that with some people. They're always going to think that way and you just have to try to educate them. And I think some people just also think that the businesses maybe take advantage of them too, a little bit, and work them to death. You know, and again, that's nothing that we can do anything about. But I know that... I think that it enhances and I think we need to help people see that it enhances. What we're trying to do, especially in the schools, that we try to learn from one another. And I think that's the whole part of what we're trying to do starting with the preschool age. And again, we try to get that message across to our elementary teachers and to our administration is that we need to welcome them into our school and we need to make them feel comfortable. We want them to come here and we want them to be a part of and learn from, and also, I think, to understand that when a child is struggling let's say at kindergarten or a first grader, and I'm talking about a Hispanic student, that it doesn't necessarily mean that they're illiterate, well that's not even the right word, it's not that they can't learn, it's the language barrier thing. We need to say, "No, we shouldn't retain them and hold them back." Because I actually had some high school students who were tutoring a kindergartener, and that time that she spent with him, she just had some cool games that she set up. And it wasn't that he didn't know. It was the language barrier thing. So I think that's where we really need to help them, because we can't just hold them back because they don't "get" English. You know, that just isn't right. How do we find that out? You know? How do we help them? You know, I need to know that too. And then what I find... who can tell me that too, what are their needs. You know, because we can only kind of guess or if we hear, but if there were some way for me to go to somebody or some organization. That's what I'm saying if I can work with someone to say, "what are their needs?" or for the parents to be able to explain. And I think Jody is such an advocate in the school for them. And she has really truly helped our school and our staff to really have appreciation because of all the work that she does, and she needs to be commended for that. She just... she really works hard at that. Yea and now I

know that she goes into the school and I think she goes into the kindergarten class rooms and spends some time there working and teaching some kindergarten kids Spanish. But then again it's teaching them Spanish, it's not the same as what we're trying to do in preschool. But at least it's something so that when the kids, again, if they have classmates that speak Spanish, isn't it cool that now they're learning Spanish so they can communicate back and forth. And how comfortable was the... I mean I was working with one of my staff and I was like, "what would it be like if I'm five years old or I'm 6 years old and I'm sitting in a classroom and everything around me makes no sense? How am I going to learn? I can't learn. I'm afraid! I'm scared!" So how do we help them to get past that? Because once we get past there, yea... what if I was in a, think about that, I was in a room where everybody was speaking Spanish? How would I feel? I'd feel like, "oh man, this is pretty scary! Very scary! What are they saying? Are they talking about me? What am I missing? Am I not doing something right?" And then if I'm not doing something right it's not because I don't want to, it's because I didn't understand. So again, how do we work past some of those barriers? I think we, on our end, need help with, as well, so we just need again that communication piece, I think is just so important. And again, being able to understand one another, and that whole respect thing and appreciation thing. You know, it's so critical, I mean that's just where it's at.

**C:** And then this is my final question, kind of in the time that you've lived here in Morris, you know from the very beginning, because you've seen the emerging community, the emerging Hispanic community from the very beginning to how it has grown now. What have your experiences been personally? Like have you made acquaintances, have you... just your experiences over all.

**P:** Well I would have to say that probably for me, I would say that my... that Jody has done a good job of opening my eyes and educating me. I think that my association and acquaintances are when people come into our office now, and my office manager is really good about it. Again, just taking that time and saying, "how can we help you? What can we do?" You know? "I don't understand you but let me find someone so we can help you." So not ignoring them or yea... I guess like I was just talking about the whole how it must feel to come into a community, and again, understanding this community in being very rural, conservative, mostly Caucasian. You know, that's got to be scary! You know, but again, how do we get those people that really care about people to be the ones that are out there advocating. I think we just need to have more advocates for them too and so I'm trying to do a better job of that, I think, and I've just seen such a... Actually probably what's also helped me, I'll back track a little bit too is my husband's niece and my husband's brother, their families live in Worthington, MN, and I'm not sure if you're familiar with Worthington, MN... Julie my niece, her husband Jorge is from... I'm not even sure, Mexico City maybe, some city in Mexico and they have two children. So they are a blended family so to speak and she works in the school, Julie does, and I think she's been really good for me too. Just listen to her stories and sometimes the struggles that they have as a family and the prejudices that they hear and it's just like, "wow, really?!" and I know that they have... my brother in law and sister in law are fluent in Spanish and they were in the Peace Corp for a number a years and spent a lot of time in Chile and all over. And so listening again to the stories that they have really makes you have empathy and wow really, you just don't realize it, it's like "seriously? People treat people like that?" You know? So that's been really good for me as well. So, yeah. So the big thing for me is how can we help? How can we be doing more? What is it that we can be doing to help?

**C:** And that's what we're trying to figure out, that's what we're trying to... because we're doing interviews with key people in the community that have played a big role in the advancement and the progress of the Hispanic community that's been emerging. So we're doing those to kind of see what has already been done? How did it start? And how has it changed? And then on top of that we're also doing focus groups which are... and those are with Hispanic community members here and whether they've been here for a long time or whether they've been here for a couple of years, a couple of months. And we're getting all of them together to see "what has your experience been like? What helped you in your transition most? And what more do you need?" So that's kind of what we're trying to figure out with this project.

**P:** You know, my youngest son worked for Hilltop Swine when he was transitioning out of high school and thinking about what he wanted to do with his life and so he worked there for two or three years. So he had some Hispanics that worked for him. He was in charge of one of the barns. And it was fun to listen to... he just enjoyed so much listening to their stories. And it helped, you know, same thing, every day when you're listening to that much, his Spanish skills... he just picked it up, just like that. And he'd have them over to his house. They'd come over and they would cook. He said, "they cook the best food!" you know? And it was really neat because they had young children and they would come over and visit with my two granddaughters and he just really, really enjoyed that.

**C:** And that was Hilltop Swine? Is that in the area?

**P:** Yes.

**C:** That's based off of Chokio?

**P:** I think so. Yea. They have barns all over. And again, you know, just hard workers and just hard workers is what he would say. My concern is, and I don't know all the different places that they're employed at, but just what are working conditions like? Is there someone addressing those kinds of needs? Or who's responsible for... I don't know... you just hear... that's the thing that I hear. That's just... that then spins somehow itself to give people a negative impression too so... your thoughts?

**C:** About that? We're trying to figure it out.

**P:** Is there going to be like a task force or a group of something? Are you going to put people together that can sit around and brainstorm? I mean what will happen next once you get all your...

**C:** From this we're trying to get all the data and do the report and from there we'll kind of figure it out after we do the report.

**P:** And who are you working with?

**C:** I'm working with Stacey Aronson and Windy Roberts

**P:** Windy's awesome!

**C:** Yea. And I'm working with them through the Center for Small Towns.

**LYNN RISER**  
**TEACHER OF ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE**  
**MORRIS AREA SCHOOLS**  
**INTERVIEWED BY CRISTINA MONTAÑEZ**

**L – Lynn Riser**

**C– Cristina Montanez**

**C:** So, what we're doing is we are trying to kind of document the history of the Hispanic community here in Morris. So, we've seen a really big spike in the population of Hispanics here in Morris and around Stevens County, so we're trying to figure out why and what makes them stay because we've heard from other important towns people in other towns that we have a very prosperous and harmonious community here, whereas it's not necessarily seen that way in other places. So we're trying to document everything and why and what services we've provided that have helped, and you were identified as one of the key stakeholders because you've worked with a lot of the ESL students and kind of helped them along the way so we would really like to get your perspective on it.

**L:** I'll be honest, not so much the adult ESL students. I tried to be a liaison between the school and the home front but I'm not bilingual so I rely on Jody Snow at the high school to help...and Windy before Jody.

**C:** So did you work before with...actually here I will let you state your name and where you were originally from before you came to Morris, or are you already from Morris?

**L:** I grew up in Chicago area. And when I was married, I moved here and was a stay at home mom with two children. One was born six weeks after we arrived here. I had been teaching strictly English in Illinois and when we came here then, I was able, thankfully, to be a stay at home mom with my two kids. Then I was divorced and needed to get back into teaching. I was a long term sub, strictly in English, really something that was neither here nor there, but I was a long term sub in English. Then second semester in '87-'88 school year in Morris...I felt like I didn't necessarily want to continue teaching just English. So come the fall of '89 I saw on the paper that they wanted or needed an ESL teacher. So I applied and got it and taught under a variance my first years and didn't become fully licensed in ESL until '92.

**C:** So you've been doing it for a while?

**L:** Forever! My first population I worked with...no Hispanics. They were Hmong!

**C:** Oh okay! Here in Morris?

**L:** Yes! And the thing was, the two families...well, there were more than two families. Well, the dads came here with their wives and young children because they wanted to get degrees at UMM. So consequently for the years that they were at UMM the children were enrolled in the Morris public schools.

**C:** So these were non-traditional students at UMM?

**L:** No they were...well the one young man that I worked with... I worked with his children; he had three at the time. His daughter began in kindergarten, and I became acquainted with the family



through her and her dad, he graduated 3<sup>rd</sup> in his class from high school in the Twin Cities. I mean he was bright! And the head of the other family, the other fellow was equally bright. And they just breezed through. Not only high school but UMM. Then when they graduated they wanted to rejoin their families in the Twin Cities. This would have been the early to mid '90s. Because '96 and '97 I was part time at the Minnewaska district and part time in Morris to make a full time contract. And my student population changed in '96/'97 to...

C: So, it changed from Hmong students to...?

L: Come to think of it, I think it was zero. Zero second language students in Morris. I think that...I was working with a Brazilian pair of orphans that had been adopted by a family in Starbuck. So I worked with them, and they had not been literate in their first language, so it was uphill.

C: So, it was an uphill battle for both their language and English?

L: Exactly. They had both been raised in an orphanage and were now, I wanna say, they were maybe 5...or maybe even 6 and 9?...thereabouts, but with no literacy. So it was really tough for the classroom teachers and myself. But we persevered, got lots of help and now they both have graduated from high school and I've lost track of them. But anyways that was my...plus there was another adoptee in the Glenwood elementary school. So I had Starbuck, Glenwood, then there was a student at the [Morris] high school, too. Bu anyway, not Hispanics so to speak, but yes, these children did have Portuguese as their first language.

C: Okay. But it wasn't necessarily Spanish then? So when did start seeing more students...more Hispanic students?

L: We began to get them in...and I should go back and look in the records at the elementary school...but it must've been the early 2000s. And at that time I was mainly teaching English, but because I was licensed in English as a Second language I would have part of my day, usually the end of the day, devoted to...at that time we were still in the other school. That old building that you see.

C: Oh! The one that's been closed down forever?

L: Exactly! Exactly! So I would drive from the high school to that building to work with some students. And they stayed, I wanna say, one school year. But then the family moved I believe to Milbank because dad was employed, and maybe mom too, I believe at the dairy.

C: It seems that dairy employment is kind of... [?]

L: ...[?]....or the large pig farm employers too in Hancock I think one of the dads worked for...

C: Yeah, there's a big hog farm right by Chokio I think is where it's based?

L: I should know...but I don't. But...let's see...in the early 2000s we had [Hispanic] kids. They didn't stay because the dads found better employment, better wages elsewhere. And I'm thinking that the first family that stayed was the XXX family. Are you familiar with Antonio? He is the head of the entire Spanish-speaking work force and he recruits in Mexico.

C: Oh okay...so they were the first family to stay.

**L:** Yea. And they had begun at KMS. I know that because I know a gal who teaches there. She's my daughter's good friend.

**C:** KMS?

**L:** Kerkhoven-Murdock-Sunburg. It's close to Willmar.

**C:** Okay.

**L:** So they had been there and then they moved to Morris. And I know previous to that they had been in Georgia and I think before that California even.

**C:** Oh wow!

**L:** I know! It's like "Wow!" But anyway, have you seen the operation? The Fehr dairy, out, I don't know if it's Chokio or...

**C:** Let's see...I've been to the one that's out on 59. It's west...it's south west of here. I've gone to that one.

**L:** Okay. It's a great big modern.

**C:** Yes.

**L:** State of the art. Yes, that's the one. [...] And um, there's also the dormitory for the workers. And it is he, I believe, who actually goes to Mexico to recruit workers. And he wants them to be single and good workers.

**C:** Single men?

**L:** Exactly. They did not...it's my understanding, and here I may be wrong on some of this information, but it is my understanding that he simply wanted single young men. The work is very physical, very demanding.

**C:** Long hours?

**L:** Exactly! I don't know how they do it. [...]

**C:** I haven't but I'm looking forward to it because I'm pretty sure I'm interviewing him at some point, too. Hopefully.

**L:** [...]

**C:** And they came as a family to work?

**L:** They did. Not Mom...Mom didn't. She was always a stay at home mom. As I said they lived in a ranch style home, a new home right there at the dairy. And now they have a lovely home out on the Mill Dam road; it's huge and it's very expensive. So he had done very, very well.

**C:** So they were the first family that came and stayed and after that did you start seeing more of an influx of Hispanic families or Hispanic children that were coming into the schools?

**L:** Here again it was...a few more of them subsequently came in...but they were...they were among the first. And actually probably THE first that stayed. And um...let's see about...[left out to protect children's identities]...the XXX family came when [their child] was in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade...came right from Mexico to Morris to work, I believe, at the dairy.

**C:** And they also came as a family?

**L:** Yes.

**C:** And what did you say their last name was?

**L:** It's XXX. I'm maybe mispronouncing it.

**C:** Never seen that last name before.

**L:** And when they enrolled, I, rightly or wrongly, Americanized their surname. [...] And I was told by...well actually Francy Turner...do you know Tom?

**C:** Yes. Tom Turner.

**L:** Yes. His wife Francy was the third grade teacher. She knows pretty much Spanish. She's not fluent but she has a fair amount. So XXX was placed in her classroom and Francy explained the last names to me and she said the father's name is what we use in this country and she thought that it was appropriate that we use dad's last name rather than the hyphenated...

**C:** Oh...mom and dad's?

**L:** And I have...to be honest I've continued with that practice whenever I was called upon to meet a new family and a new student, I would choose dad's last name as the surname [...].

**C:** I guess this is a very general question, but I guess what have your experiences been with the Hispanic community? Because I know now you deal mostly with ESL students K-12 right? How has it been dealing with their parents? Or I guess...um...how has it been with the parents and their children? Do you see the parents a lot?

**L:** Well, I see them at conferences, and, um, they're wonderful! I mean, I wish I were bilingual. I struggle to communicate and always there would have to be a translator for conferences because almost entirely the parents are not bilingual. But they're wonderful people and want all the best for their kids, like any parent would. And, um, they're just really nice people! They're very fortunate to have...I mean, they're generous, you know, wondering what can they do, you know, to make things better for their children. You know, if I do something...for their birthday I give the kids a little book, and they're so grateful! It's like, "wow!"

**C:** I guess that leads me to my next question which is how well equipped do you see Morris in providing services for children that re ESL or that do come with...that are from a Hispanic family or that are newcomers to Morris or to the United States?

**L:** The gal who was my replacement is bilingual. She teaches an hour, I think, each day in Spanish at the high school in Minneswaska. So then she comes here...she's not licensed...and she's very resourceful...you know I gave her some suggestions. Um, she became acquainted and...she

phoned a St. Cloud ESL teacher...they have a bigger department...and so she feels very comfortable calling her and asking questions. I mean, she asks me too, but this gal has much more experience than I...so she's a more solid question-answerer than I am.

C: Okay... so to follow that...

L: I hope she takes some classes though!

C: So I asked you about how well equipped you saw Morris, or the community to be in helping children of Hispanic families, but then how do you...how well equipped do you see the services that the community, or Morris, or the surrounding areas provide for the parents of these children?

L: They have begun inviting...well they have always invited the parents to some classes, some English classes. And I think Tom Haugen [?] has taken over for Steve Sterud[?] who was the head of Community Ed's adult basic ed. I think Thomas has tried to encourage some of the parents to come to the classes. It's hard because dad works long hours and mom's got the kids, some of them who are quite young still. It's so hard. It just is. I think they've begun to be able to get more...more parents.

C: So I guess...you mentioned earlier that it was the...that usually they...that Antonio, he tried to recruit single men who were good workers. So it seems like now there's more families that are coming.

L: Actually one family that came, the XXX family, they came from Melrose. And dad, I believe he works at the dairy. But there are...you know in Melrose it seems that there are more families there. I remember being at some state meetings and meeting some of the Melrose ESL teachers and they mentioned this family...and there's still a bunch of other XXX in Melrose. So the XXX family...that's a family. And I think dad works either with hogs or the dairy...and I'm not sure...I think XXX works...I think at the dairy. But also there is the mom is remarried...her son is XXX. Do you know Edna Martinez from La Tienda?

C: Yeah, yeah.

L: That's his mom. And he has two siblings. Two younger siblings: XXX, which is not her real name I found out, but she came to us from the Sisseton area, as did XXX. And recently, there's also a little guy, XXX. [...] Who was Cruz Martinez, but now is Martinez-Mar, and Hector was Lozano-Martinez.

C: Oh my gosh...well the point is that there's more families now.

L: Exactly. But anyway, they came...they've been here for quite some time- Edna Martinez and the children. Because XXX was just...I want to say he was like...I think he's a senior this year...and he was like 3<sup>rd</sup> grade? Something like that- third or fourth grade when the family came. So there's that family. The XXX. And then last year another family moved from Appleton and there were three children in that family. And it was interesting because a little guy came in to kindergarten last spring when I was still at Morris. And his teacher said, "I'm sure he has big language needs." Well the little kid was scared. You know, big new school and new friends. So anyway, she said, after a week or two, she said, "he's doing better, but I'd like you to test him."

So I tested him. He was proficient. It was like, “wow!” This little guy might not have said much at first but it isn’t because he doesn’t have the language.

C: He was just nervous.

L: Exactly. Then I found out that he had a sister and a brother in the high school, and they had been in Morris when the high school kids were in, I want to say, early elementary. But they had not stayed. They had been here for like maybe a year and had moved on and I lost complete track. But now they’re doing so well. I mean, the little one, the little guy, the kindergartener is doing so well. And I met his sister, I didn’t say that, but I introduced myself and she sort of remembered me. And she was taking like advanced chemistry. I mean, she’s doing really well. It’s not that we did *so much*, but clearly she’s a bright girl, her English is perfect. It’s nice to see.

C: That is very exciting. Well, this one’s just kind of tying in everything a little bit: one is how...what are some of the positive aspects that you see that Morris offers to new Hispanic families, like newcomers; what’re some of the positive aspects that we offer, or that Stevens County offers to newcomers?

L: To be honest, I really can’t speak about the community at large, but...I try to encourage that the families use the library. Melissa is more than willing to make sure that we have books that are bilingual, both languages. I know that Community Ed, they’ve been so good at offering scholarships for the afterschool programs for the kids.

C: And these kinds of scholarships, what are they? What are they for?

L: Like fifty percent of the tuition. Fifty percent reduction on the tuition for various afterschool programs. You know they’ve been really good. And I want to say, I think the transit allowed a reduction, well at least for the Chinese-American couple they did, but I can’t remember if they did it for Hispanics. They would have I’m sure, but I don’t know that we asked them for that.

C: Oh ok. But it’s nice to know that it’s out there.

L: Exactly...I know probably ten things will occur to me, Cristina once I...

C: Oh, that’s fine! So I guess, kind of wrapping up a little bit of everything and a bit of the notes that I took, and things we’ve talked about is:

So you’re originally from the Chicago area and you moved here to Morris in the 80s? Early 80s was it?

L: Um...late 60s?

C: Oh ok! I guess the first date I jotted down was 80s when you started teaching.

L: It was ’68. That’s when my son was born. It’s easy to keep track, six months after we get here, I was in the hospital!

C: So you moved here to Morris in the late 60s and then you started teaching in the late 80s. First you taught English and that’s when you moved into teaching ESL, and at first it was Hmong families.

**L:** Exactly, you've got it.

**C:** And then for a while you were part-time Minnewaska, and part-time Morris. And there weren't any ESL students here in Morris. And you didn't have any Hispanic students; you had other students, whether it was Brazilian, Hmong, or something else. Then you started seeing, in the early 2000s, is when you started seeing Hispanic children being in the schools. And the first family who stayed was the Mendez family.

**L:** Yes, I believe that's accurate. I'll think back tonight. I can't think of anybody else, but no, I think that was the first. And interestingly, when I worked with the XXX children, XXX was, I think a first grader when they came, and a local family, a local man had married a woman from the Dominican Republic. And so her little boy, she had had him from a previous relationship, she had a little boy, and he was non-English speaking. So I worked with XXX and XXX together since they both had Spanish as their first language.

**C:** So now is when you've been seeing a lot of...whereas at first there was a lot of influx of Hispanics you saw was single men because they were needed for work, and now you're seeing a lot more of an influx of families. So you actually see children at the schools and stuff.

**L:** Exactly.

**C:** Well, I think that's everything I have. Unless you want to add something?

**L:** Well, I'll just keep going on and on. No, I think I'm good, Cristina.

**C:** All right, well, thank you very much for your time.

**L:** You're welcome.

**WINDY GONZÁLEZ ROBERTS****SPANISH INSTRUCTOR AT UMM**

My name is Windy González Roberts. I am originally from Caracas, Venezuela. I came to the United States in 1987. I studied and lived in the Boston area and was always involved with the Hispanic community at different levels.

After living in several places in the United States and Canada, I relocated to Morris, Minnesota in 1999 with my family where my husband took an academic job at the university. I also was offered a job at the local high school teaching Spanish.

Compared to other places I lived before, Morris is a very small city with a very limited Hispanic population. In fact, when I moved in, people in town wanted me to get in touch with “the other Hispanic” in town, a Brazilian woman. Through this Brazilian woman I learned that the Catholic priest spoke Spanish and later, due to the number of Spanish speakers in town, there was a mass given by a Venezuelan priest from St. Cloud once a month. Quite a service for a town this size!

At the high school there were not any other Hispanics. After a year or two a family came and their young daughters started to attend school. At that time there was one ESL teacher who from time to time asked me to join her during parent-teacher conferences to avoid misunderstanding and help interpreting for the family. Until then the main service of the ESL teacher was to help the international exchange students that came to the high school for a year.

Also there was the knowledge that men from Mexico were working in the nearby dairies. Many of these workers were young and uneducated. I would often see them in the stores and tried to have a simple conversation. On several occasions I was called from the hospital to help translate for them as they were in need of medical attention. I did it on a volunteer basis and the hospital was very thankful about my free services. The most interesting cases were when the hospital called me to help translate for young mothers.

It was clear to me with time that the Hispanic population was growing, and the needs for translators and services to the Hispanics were growing too. At school more young families were coming in and my services as an interpreter and translator increased. There was also the need to produce informational material for the parents in Spanish, so important messages could reach the parents. The Community Education office had a one day a week ESL/GED class. To my knowledge it was not very efficient in helping the Hispanics in need to learn English.

At the hospital and the county office, they starting using a phone system where a bilingual person from another county would be over the phone and translate for the Hispanic and

pertinent office. I also was asked to do some of those calls where there were three people talking to each other to resolve, for example, a dispute over a utility bill that was late or not paid.

In the middle all this, the university started to become active by offering ESL classes at the dairies. There were good intentions but also a lack of training of the students that volunteered. Sadly things did not go well and the program fell through. Through my job as a teacher at the high school, I continue teaching the importance of reaching out for the few Hispanics in town to hear authentic Spanish other than mine. Many of my students worked in different businesses around town and had the opportunity to interact with the Hispanics and reported to me positive exchanges. The town could see at its regular stores that the Hispanics were in town. In fact, near that time the main grocery store started to offer money wiring services to Mexico. Later on the same grocery store made available a small section of their store where Mexican products were sold.

Out the clear need to better serve the new shoppers in town, one member of the community decided to make an investment and opened a Hispanic grocery store. Her goal was to offer a grocery store where many of the products that the Hispanics needed to prepare their meals were available. It was an immediate success!

Later the same business passed to the hand of a Latina woman, who increased the type of merchandise and became “the center” for help for the Hispanics in the city and other nearby towns. It was nice to know that the person who opened the store was one of the women I helped at the hospital when she had her third child.

My first “official job” in terms of being a “link” to the Hispanics in Morris was when I was invited to become part of the Morris Red Cross chapter. Its member saw the need to have on board a bilingual and bicultural member to better help, if in need, any Hispanic member of the Morris city and surrounding areas that this chapter of the Red Cross served. The Red Cross was very aware of the numbers of Hispanics in Morris and felt that they needed to be ready if there ever was a need from his sector of the populations in Morris. I served on the board for five years and was sure that all the literature that was available was also in Spanish. Otherwise, my involvement with the Hispanic community continued only in an informal way.

For the last five years I have been teaching Spanish at the university. Here I became aware of the Service Learning in Spanish and the job that one faculty had been doing to increase the number of interactions between the students and the Hispanic population in Morris. Also one more initiative from the same faculty member was to organize a Hispanic Film Festival by bringing Hispanic movies to Morris for the last four years. This has been a very successful event every year now and many of the Hispanics from Morris and nearby towns come to watch the movies.

One day during the first film festival, one of the Spanish students who was volunteering at the concession stand, was passing little pieces of paper offering ESL classes at the university



to the Hispanic in attendance. This caught my eye and I asked him what it was all about. He explained to me that was part of a project from one his Latin American area studies class. The project was called “Proyecto Amistad” and that the idea behind it was to offer not only ESL classes but also a social place to help the increasing population in Morris that otherwise was not being served. I asked him what about the ESL classes at the community center? He told me about the time and structure and I already knew it was not a good one given the schedule of the Hispanic workers. I decided to follow this project closely and I became part of the it. I went to their first day of class, a combination of “get together” and potluck. There I became acquainted with the Hispanics who really wanted to become part of this community by overcoming the big barrier, the lack of English skills. To my surprise, many of these Hispanic were college educated and very eager to learn proper English. Still these classes were set in a very informal environment and only one goal of the project was being completely fulfilled, the goal of establishing friendships.

That same year, a Fulbright Political Science professor from Mexico arrived to the university to spend a semester teaching here. She became very quickly aware of the extent of the population of Hispanics in Morris. At the same time, since one of her areas of investigation has to do with patterns of Mexican migration to the United States, she wanted to know where there were concentrations of Mexicans around Morris. That took her to Montevideo. There she learned about a community of Mexicans and Guatemalans that once lived in some kind of harmony. However, this harmony was destroyed by one bad incident that involved one Hispanic with a connection to that city. There were several violent incidents against the Hispanics and the harmony in Montevideo was gone. A community activist from there advised her to pass this news to Morris and to start doing some groundwork to create a real community connection among the different residents of Morris with the Hispanics to avoid a similar situation. From there the Fulbright professor started her search for a group of community members including Hispanics that would be interested in forming a task group that would work to create links between the different members of the community in Morris and foment bonds with the Hispanic community. Five people formed the first group. Among the members there are university students, Hispanic members well regarded and already established in the community, myself and other members from Morris. We started by addressing important needs like better options for the ESL classes and social events to integrate all groups. Our first goal was to find places, events, etc. where members from all the different groups in Morris could coincide and get to know each other. From there we organized the first community meal. It happened that we were close to “Cinco de Mayo” so the group decided to have a community then. It was a complete success. We served authentic Mexican food to people from all walks in our community, and we got many donations that made it possible to actually have some profit to later organize more events like the summer and winter soccer league. As a group we continue meeting once a month finding more and better ways to turn the gap between the Hispanics and the Morris community smaller through education, and fun activities.

The summer after the first year of ESL classes, another student who became involved with the ESL classes and I got together with another ESL teacher in town who was teaching English at a church and at a dairy. We decided that we needed to unify somehow all the places that were teaching ESL and put together the resources to start a better ESL program where the teaching was more consistent and could lead to better learning results. The student's efforts brought in a more "official way" the participation of the Office of Community Engagement from the University of Minnesota, Morris. Resources were allocated by the Dean's office to offset some the costs of the more formal implementation of the ESL at the university. I am one of the coordinators of a now very successful ESL program and one of the supervisors of the ESL volunteer university students.

As faculty from the university, I decided to start the Spanish conversation table and make it available not only to students but also to others, including Spanish native speakers from the community. This was another way to create real links among the different groups.

During the first Cinco de Mayo meal one of my students got very excited about the atmosphere at the event. This reminded her of her participation in a project in the cities called the Jane Addams School for Democracy. This project's main theme is to bring immigrant families, college students and other community members together to do public work and learning. She thought that the implementation of such project in Morris could be a great addition to what already had started. Well, she was right. Jane Addams is a complete success among the participants. As a result of the very successful implementation of the Jane Addams project, today it is a very popular opportunity for the university students to get involved and also to get an internship credit! I am the faculty supervisor for the students who decide to do it for credits.

The ESL classes are more formal at this point, now even with a placement test that determines better where the students should start or continue their learning. All these efforts have turned into a five days a week collection of programs during the academic year. Every week there are ESL classes on Mondays, Thursdays, and Saturdays. In order to become involved the students need to not only take the placement test, but also buy their own textbooks, and attend regularly to classes. There is also childcare available for the participant with children. Every Tuesday there is the meeting with the Jane Addams project and Wednesdays, the students have the option to attend to the ESL offered at the community education facility or play soccer.

Overall my experiences and my involvement with the Hispanic community in Morris has been a very rewarding one. As a Hispanic, I feel very proud about how far our efforts have gone since I moved to rural Minnesota in 1999.

**LISANDRA SPERR  
EMPLOYEE AT UMM DINING SERVICES  
INTERVIEWED BY CRISTINA MONTAÑEZ**

**L- Lisandra                    C- Cristina**

**C:** Where are you from, meaning, where were you raised...maybe these are two different questions? And how much, actually, let's start with these two first.

**L:** Okay, where am I from. I was born in the Dominican Republic and I grew up in the Dominican Republic as well. I came to Morris in the year 2002.

**C:** In the year 2002? And have you been working since then or did you come with your family...?

**L:** No. No. I got here...I came because my husband...the person who I married is from this area. And when I came here I only had one son, and he came with me. And later the rest of my family members were born here. I have three boys, one was born in Santo Domingo, and the other two were born here in Morris.

**C:** When did you begin working in what you are doing now?

**L:** I didn't begin to work immediately. I came here in 2002 and began to work in 2004...because I needed to learn English. Because of the language situation, the language barrier...but anyway. I began to learn English little by little, I began to understand and I began to make myself be understood. And then I began to work. I work at the University of Morris in food service. It is my only job for now.

**C:** And you have been working here since 2004?

**L:** Yes, since 2004.

**C:** And you begin because you wanted to learn English. Or was it that you had to learn English?

**L:** No, on the contrary. I had to learn English first to later be able to work.

**C:** Oh, okay! And what is it that you like about your job? What has helped you, or how have you adapted here at your work?

**L:** Well ... about my work, I like that I can interact with a small part of the Morris community, which is the students...and anyway...I can make so[me] money.

**C:** Well, that's never bad! And what kind of pastimes do you have here in Morris?

**L:** Not much...every now and then I go out to the stores in Morris to do some shopping. Every now and then I get together with a friend and go out and have a drink, socially, one day. And....only pastimes?

**C:** Anything you would like to tell me.

**L:** Another one of my pastimes is to go out and do some translating when I have some free time for my Latino brothers. And that's all I do.

**C:** Can you please tell me a bit more about the translating you do and all of that?

**L:** With the translating, it's a bit funny because when I arrived here in 2002, one day my husband had to leave for work, and my son had to be enrolled in kindergarten. So my husband said, "Oh, I think you just have to sign up his name and that should be all. I think you'll be able to do it." He let me go to the school to register my son. When I got to the school, I can tell you that at the school I saw probably two Latino children with my son, two or three, no more. And when I got to the school they greeted me with, "A Latina lady just got here who speaks Spanish and we have to do a questionnaire to enroll the child in the school. So what are we supposed to do now? She doesn't understand any English!" I waited a while, not a very long time, and they called a professor from the university and his wife, who is now my friend. To this day she remains as my friend, thank God I met her that day. They translated the questionnaire for me. I felt like (\*\*sigh\*\*), relieved! When they got there and I saw her Latino face among so many whites, and she spoke my language! I took a breath and said, "I feel relieved, I feel better." From that moment, I began to learn English little by little, I went to classes, at school with Community Ed who hosted some classes for adults. And I went to classes, I learned a little. Afterward I felt a bit more confident and I said, "Now I can go out and do what was done for me before." Later when I worked for the school and Latino family would arrive to enroll their kids, I would help. I would volunteer for the school, and anyway...in some way I returned the favor. What was done for me before I began to do for others. To this day I continue to do it. Every time I'm called for, if I'm available, I help. I do the same. I know that I still have a lot to learn. I know that I have to continue perfecting my English, the language, but I know that at least I can speak more than some of my Latino brothers who have nothing like when I arrived here. I only knew how to say, "yes", "hi". And then...anyway...that's how it is.

**C:** That's really great.

**L:** Yeah, in some way I enjoy it because, for example, the other day I got a call from a lady and she said, "There's a young man here who keeps staring at my car tires. He's been looking at them for a long time. Lisandra, can you please ask him what he wants?" It's funny! So then I tell

her to hand him the phone, to put him on the phone. So I say “hi” to him, I don’t know who he is, and I say, “Hi. This lady is wondering if you have a question for her about the tires.” And he says, “Yes! I need to buy some new tires, but I don’t know where they’re sold. So can you please tell her?” And I said, “No, no don’t worry. Right this minute she’ll guide you to the place. She will tell you where you can go look for them, the tires for the car.” Sometimes it’s funny. They’re small things! But for the people who can’t express themselves it’s difficult.

**C:** They’re things that many of us....many of us take for granted.

**L:** Very easily! Only for us that know. When you don’t know, it’s very difficult. And besides, I enjoy it. I enjoy my Latino people. For me, they are my brothers and sisters.

**C:** So then, on a scale from 1-10, ten being the most difficult, how has your moving to Morris been since you arrived here in 2002?

**L:** For me the most difficult part, when I arrived in Morris, was starting from scratch. Because that’s how I started, from nothing. Everything from the food, the houses, everything looks different, the language, the people...for me everything, everything was...I started with nothing. I left my family...but anyway...it wasn’t so bad...

**C:** Yes, it’s hard sometimes. It is hard when we look back at what we’ve left behind. And that was the hard part, looking at what you left behind, but upon arriving here, adapting to new things, what was the most difficult part about that?

**L:** Oh God, Cristina...well....

*BREAK*

**C:** Looking at everything you left behind is very difficult, the things you left behind, but when you got here, what difficulties did you encounter? Here with everything new that you were seeing.

**L:** Well, for me the most difficult part was leaving my family behind, leaving my career, because in some way, I had a university degree and I was working in my area of study. For me, that was the most difficult thing. And when I got to Morris, the biggest difficulty I encountered was the language, and it continues to be the language. It’s never going to end! The language... But yes, thank God, little by little, I keep overcoming it. One learns, one begins to understand, and it feels better.

**C:** Can I ask you to tell me a bit more about your career in Mexico?

**L:** In Mexico, I attended a university, and I acquired a law degree. I have a bachelor’s in law in my country. But I was good lawyer! I worked in civil suits. Civil, I would charge, deal with money, debt...it was the area I liked, because I didn’t like the penal area.

**C:** Is that something that you would like to possibly continue with in the future when you improve your English?

**L:** Yes, I am considering continuing, or beginning my education in this country. I still am not sure if I want to continue with law or if I am going to study something different. In all reality, I

don't know. But it could be. One never knows. The only difficult thing is that Morris is a very small town and it doesn't offer very many opportunities for education. It's my only problem. The only difficulty I've encountered when it comes to education.

**C:** Is it something you could continue with in the future?

**L:** Probably.

**C:** As a new comer to this community, what kinds of services or programs or activities, opportunities existed to help with your transition? I know you mentioned that when you arrived here you tried to enroll your son in kindergarden and they brought you a translator, but what other types of...

**L:** Well, at that time there weren't very many services or programs, like you say, or opportunities for someone that had just arrived from somewhere else. But thank God, that has improved greatly. I bet that it has improved a lot. Because, for example, the school has translation services, it has classes for people who speak Spanish. In the end, everything has improved. Yes. Here too, the university, it has, what is it called? ESL?

**C:** Yes. ESL.

**L:** Yes, yes. Services to learn English. Yes, for those of us Latinos that are here, so we can have the opportunity to learn. That is very important. Much is needed still. Because for example, is the health sector, mmmm, I know that there is a lot of work that needs to be done. Because we have a lot of people who go to the Morris hospital daily and they don't count on a physical person to be there with them doing the translating, to make them feel comfortable, speaking to the doctor about problems and illnesses... But I know it will change. It will change because we are progressing.

**C:** How have you seen the services you've talked to me about change? How have you seen them change over time?

**L:** Yes, I believe they have changed because in the year 2002, the community of Morris was a closed community. It was a community that was not...how should I say?

**C:** Prepared?

**L:** They did not know...in some sense prepared...but they did not know about immigration or about other people who came from other parts of the world. I can bet...in the year 2002 we had a priest who arrived here with me and who spoke Spanish. There were the farms, the dairy farms, the milk farm. They were small still, they hadn't grown as much as they've grown up until now. That was back in 2002. We had a priest who spoke Spanish. That was when Morris began to wake up, to know that they did have people from other parts of the world. And we also had a doctor who was bilingual, who spoke Spanish. I believe that since then, like I mentioned earlier, at the school we only counted with two or three Latino children. So there wasn't a need for as many services and things because there were only people from here. But yes, I know that we are making progress. Because I have lived it. When I arrived, that's when the Latino community was emerging, and I have been a participant, and I have grown. I have gone with both communities, I belong to both communities. I am married to a man who is from here, so then I interact with both

communities. I belong; I go from the American community to the Latino community, who are my brothers. I go with their progress; I am always watching how things are going for them, and I know that, yes, here we are making progress.

**C:** You have mentioned several times that when you arrived here there were no more than two or three children that were Latino in the schools. So then have you seen more children have been coming, and families, what has the school done to help them?

**L:** I can bet that the Latino population in the Morris schools has been growing. I can bet because I worked at the school. I would more or less see everything, and I would pay attention every time a Latino child would arrive. I would pay attention and I knew...and yes. I can bet that the school has been providing very good service for the Latino community.

**C:** Did you work at the school as a volunteer?

**L:** No. I worked for the food service as well.

**C:** In your opinion, what positive aspect does the community of Morris have now or has had in the past for a Hispanic newcomer?

**L:** Well, about that I can tell you that the community of Morris, like I already told you, thank God is open to diversity and thanks to that, here they recognize that here we are no longer just one community, we are divided into two. They are working. They, thank God, are working to offer services for the people that come from another part of the world that for some reason arrived here. And they're here! Yes, I believe we are making progress. Like I already told you before, I know that we are making progress. Because, thanks to God, this is a fantastic community, this community of Morris. And it's fantastic because being so small, it offers opportunities for the people, it had opportunities for the people that are here and for the people that get here from other parts of the world. That is what makes this a super interesting community. And in addition to that, like I already told you, we are open, *they* are open to diversity. Not everyone. I can't tell you that the whole world is open to diversity, immigrants, people of other races, from other parts of the world. Not everyone understands and accepts that here we have people from other worlds...from other parts of the world... But yes, that part that does not accept us, including me, because I was not born in Morris, I am an immigrant like many others. I know that that part that does not accept us is minimal, it is very small. And I know that that will be changing. The little that is left will be dissipating. The small racial barrier that exists here will be dissipating little by little. Thanks to God, our children are receiving a good education at school. And in the future they will be able to overcome it, us who are the parents, they will be able to integrate perfectly into this community of Morris.

**C:** This, this is something I want to ask for myself, but how do you see, in comparison to other towns or cities, and this is just because I like Mexican food...

**L:** How? The relations between the two communities?

**C:** The availability? The access that we have to places or foods of things that we need or wish to have from our own culture.

**L:** Yes, that is also improving. Because when I arrived here, here there were no, how should I tell you, there were no stores...?

**C:** Stores?

**L:** Yes, grocery store for Latinos. There were none! A lady from the American community barely initiated a store with food for Latinos. And La Tienda is still open. Barely, and later when... a short time after the supermarket...

**C:** Willie's?

**L:** Yes, Willie's. They opened up a space with food for people from other parts of the world. So I know that yes, we are improving. Because I used to say, "And where am I going to find my food? Where am I going to find my cilantro?" And then I said, "Oh, okay. It's appeared!" Happiness. Yes. Everything here will be changing, thanks to God.

**C:** Being a Hispanic from the Dominican...

**L:** Dominican Republic.

**C:** The Dominican Republic. How has your experience in Morris been? Positive, negative? How has it been in general?

**L:** With the Hispanic community?

**C:** First with the general community of Morris, then with the Hispanic community.

**L:** With the original Morris community, with the American community, the experience was good. It has been good because I have learned lots of things that I did not know and I keep learning, because they say that people never stop learning.

**C:** Well, that is true.

**L:** Yes, I also appreciate the opportunity I was given to...

*BREAK*

**C:** Please, keep telling what you were talking about.

**L:** I was saying that I thank, once more, the community of Morris, the American community. It's a community that greeted us with open arms, the other community I belong to, the Latino community. And anyway... They accepted us in their community. They didn't know anything about immigration, and I tell you, I repeat to you again, everything is not perfect. Because there are still people who reject us. But no, that will continue to change. And I appreciate it. I know that deep inside, the Latino community we have here in Morris is not one of the worst communities that there are. I am very proud of my Latino community, because if you've noticed, what happens in most cities between the two communities doesn't happen here. Because they [in other communities] become rivals. The children that are growing, the growing community becomes enemies with the original community and... No, not here, that will not happen here, ever. That is one of the reasons why I am so proud of my Latino community. Because, thank God, the Latino community that has come to Morris is a hard working community, that



came...the majority came here for employment reasons because they wanted better opportunities in their life. And they are people who day by day, they wake up and go to work, and then they go back the next day. And they are people with good temperament, the majority. And, anyway... They came here to advance. Some of us came because our partner is from here, some of us didn't choose to come to Morris. We came because our partner is from here. And this is where we have to be, and this is where we have to grow and work. And what do I know...survive. But that other part of the Latino community that did come, they came for their own advancement. And thanks to Morris, Morris opened its doors for them and they are making it.

**C:** Would you like to say...would you like to contribute anything else or get something off your chest? Or your mind?

**L:** Off my chest...No. Just that I thank, once again, those people who do understand that we are different, totally different. We look different, we act differently, and we are different, and we come from different cultures, those that understand that we come from other parts of the world and we have another type of life. And they, thank God, understand us, in some way or another they comprehend. And they understand that we eat over there, for instance, over there it is *pan camarón*, I eat *pan camarón* in my country, but here it is called a croissant. So they understand that we are learning, starting from zero, and that we have to learn doubly, that our brain day by day works double. Because we have to listen in the English language and translate it to our mother tongue which is Spanish, and then act upon it. So like...that's how it is.

**C:** Well, thank you very much for your time then.

**L:** You're welcome. It was a pleasure.

**C:** The pleasure was all mine.

## FOCUS GROUPS:

We advertised for focus group participants by posting the following sign in places frequented by Latino community members:

Wanted ... members of the Latino community to participate in a project whose goal will be to document the history of the Latino experience in Morris and in Stevens County during the last ten years. Together with the Center for Small Towns, Professors Stacey Parker Aronson and Windy González Roberts will participate in this study. We need you! We are going to organize focus groups led by two students from the University of Minnesota, Morris. Your participation will consist of a maximum of two hours during one evening. If you are interested in participating in this project and in making your voice heard, please contact one of us at the following telephone numbers or e-mails:

Stacey (320-589-6290) [aronsosp@morris.umn.edu](mailto:aronsosp@morris.umn.edu)

Windy (320-589-6294) [wroberts@morris.umn.edu](mailto:wroberts@morris.umn.edu)

Thank you very much for your valuable help.

*Se busca ... a miembros de la comunidad latina para participar en un proyecto cuyo enfoque será documentar la historia de la experiencia de los Latinos de Morris y del condado de Stevens durante los últimos diez años. Junto con el Center for Small Towns, las profesoras Stacey Parker Aronson y Windy Roberts participan en este estudio. Con ese fin, se necesita a ustedes. Vamos a organizar grupos de conversación facilitados por dos estudiantes de la Universidad de Minnesota, Morris. El compromiso consistirá de un máximo de dos horas durante una noche. Si está dispuesto(a) participar en este proyecto y hacer que se le oiga la voz, favor de ponerse en contacto con una de nosotras a los siguientes números de teléfono o correos electrónicos:*

*Stacey (320-589-6290) [aronsosp@morris.umn.edu](mailto:aronsosp@morris.umn.edu)*

*Windy (320-589-6294) [wroberts@morris.umn.edu](mailto:wroberts@morris.umn.edu)*

*Muchísimas gracias por su valiosa ayuda. Saludos cordiales,*

One focus group consisting of ?? participants was held on DATE. The session, moderated by our student assistants, utilized the following questions:

### Question Route

#### **I. Introduction**

1. I would like us to take a minute to go around the room so everyone can introduce themselves. If you could please state your name, where you are from (region in Mexico/Latin America), how long you have lived here in Morris?

2. What are your pastimes?

## **II. Basic Information**

1. How did you first become aware of this community?

2. Was it a personal or economic decision to come here?

3. In relation to your level of experience/education, profession or specialty, how do you view job availability in your hometown/state?

4. In contrast, how do you view job availability in the state of Minnesota, and more specifically, Morris?

5. On a scale of 1-10, 10 being the most difficult, how has your migration/relocation to Morris been? What have been some of the difficulties that you have encountered since your arrival?

6. What establishments or services of the community do you use most frequently? (grocery store, Laundromat, gas stations, banks, car sales agencies, etc.)

7. What programs, opportunities, activities, etc. have helped your transition here run more smoothly?

8. In your opinion, what positive aspects does the city of Morris offer for a newly arrived Hispanic in the community?

## **III. Main Questions**

1. What events have you attended and in what kind of activities have you participated in the community? For example: Lazos, conversation table, soccer league, ESL classes, GED classes, religious services, holiday events, etc.

2. Of the services and activities offered by the city, county and university, which have you found most useful, and which do you use with most frequency?

3. If you attend the ESL classes, do you think the experience has improved your English skills? What is your opinion about these classes and/or what changes would you like to see to improve your experience?

4. Until now, what have your experiences been with programs and events offered by the university, such as Jane Addams, soccer league, holiday events, etc?

5. What is your opinion on the role the university plays on the Hispanic community?

#### **IV. Closing Comments**

1. Since you have lived in Morris, how have the services offered by the city and the university changed for the Hispanic community?
2. Additionally, taking into consideration that these changes would possibly help yourself as well as future Hispanic newcomers, what changes would you like to see implemented?
3. Based on all aspects of life in Morris, how would you classify your experience with and in the community?

### **Esquema**

#### **I. Introducción**

1. *Buenas tardes, me llamo \_\_\_\_\_. Me gustaría pasar alrededor del cuarto para que cada quien se introduzca. Si por favor, podrían decir su nombre, de donde son (región de Mexico/Latinoamerica), cuantos años han vivido aquí en Morris, y si viven con familiares, amigos, etc.*
2. *¿Qué clase de pasatiempos disfruta en su tiempo libre?*

#### **II. Información Básica**

1. *¿Como se enteró usted de esta comunidad?*
2. *¿Era/Fue una decisión económica o personal venir aquí?*
3. *En relación con su entrenamiento, nivel de educación, profesión, especialidad, ¿cómo ve la disponibilidad de trabajos en su propia ciudad de origen?*
4. *En contraste, ¿cómo ve la disponibilidad de trabajos en el estado de Minnesota y aquí en Morris?*
5. *En una escala de 1-10, 10 siendo lo mas dificultoso, ¿Cómo ha sido su mudanza a Minnesota/Morris? ¿Qué han sido unas de las dificultades que ha tenido desde que llego a Minnesota/Morris?*
6. *¿Cuáles establecimientos y/o servicios de la comunidad usa con frecuencia? (tienda de abarrotes, lavandería, gasolineras, bancos, agencia de ventas de carros, etc.)*

7. *¿Que programas, oportunidades, actividades, etc. lo(a) han ayudado a que su transición ocurra con menos complicaciones?*
8. *En su opinión, ¿qué aspectos positivos ofrece la ciudad de Morris para hispano recién llegado?*

### **III. Preguntas Principales**

1. *¿A qué eventos ha asistido y en que clase de actividades participa usted aquí en la comunidad? Por ejemplo: Lazos, mesa de conversación, liga de futbol, clases de Ingles como segundo lenguaje, clases de GED, servicios religiosos, eventos de días festivos, etc.*
2. *¿De los servicios proporcionados por la ciudad, el condado y la universidad, cuales han sido más útiles y cuales usa con más frecuencia?*
3. *Si usted esta e las clases de Ingles como segundo idioma, ¿cree que la experiencia ha mejorado su Ingles? ¿Qué opinión tiene sobre estas clases y/o cambios le gustaría ver para mejorar su experiencia?*
4. *Hasta ahora, ¿Cuáles son y como has sido sus experiencias con los programas y eventos ofrecidos por la universidad? Por ejemplo: Jane Addams, Lazos, liga de futbol, eventos de días festivos etc.*
5. *¿Qué opina sobre el papel que juega la universidad en la comunidad hispana?*

### **IV. Comentarios Finales**

1. *A lo largo de su residencia en Morris, ¿como han cambiado los servicios ofrecidos por la comunidad y la universidad hacia la comunidad hispana? ¿Cómo ha cambiado la comunidad misma?*
2. *Adicionalmente, ¿Qué cambios le gustaría ver suceder en la comunidad tomando en cuenta que estos cambios posiblemente lo(a) ayudarían a si mismo, al igual que a nuevos Hispanos que llegaran en el futuro?*
3. *Basado en todos los aspectos de su vida en Morris, ¿como clasificaría su experiencia con la comunidad?*





## FOCUS GROUP #1

C: Good afternoon. My name is Cristina, and I would like everyone to go around the table, saying your names, and if you could please tell us where you are from, or rather what region of Mexico or Latin America you come from and how many years you've lived in Morris --and if you live with family members, friends, colleagues, etc..

N: Ok, my name is N. I've lived in Morris for about 7 years now. I'm from Colombia, -- Bogotano. My wife is also Colombian, from Cali. I've participated in certain events here in Morris...the Cinco de Mayo dinner...hmmm

J: My name is J. I am from Mexico --from Xacatecas?? I've been living here in Morris, for about 2 years. I work for a dairy, Riverview..and..

B: My name is B. I am from the state of Michoacan, Mexico. I work in the same company as J, Riverview. I live over there with my colleagues, in an office.

C: Ok, so then, could you tell me what type of pastimes you enjoy here in Morris? --in your free time?

N: Ok...I fish...because here, there are 10,000 lakes. It's one of my pastimes...although I had never fished, but like everyone does it, so one eventually does what everyone else does. So, fishing is one of my pastimes and other sports ---ride snowmobile in the winter ---on the snowmobile it's so cold! but there are also many soccer games that we organize between ourselves --it's a sport that we really like --we maintain it and it's something that we enjoy here.

J: Well, my pastimes here...I mostly play soccer in the High School during the winter..and in the summer, we play soccer out there near the dairies. Sometimes, we meet up in Morris to play basketball, or soccer --but not very frequently. Another pastime would be reading and then communicating with my family back home.

B: Well...I can't really think of a specific pastime. But communicating with my family, and in my free time, going out to explore, etc.

C: How is that you first heard about this community? Or rather, how is that you first heard about Morris, and what were your reasons for coming here?

N: Ok...well, we came to Minnesota about 10 years ago. We lived in another town called Appleton, some 6 miles south of here. My wife was hired as a doctor in the hospital, here in Morris. And we were looking for a house, but we didn't know where? But when we came to Morris, I saw all those great trees...and I love trees, there was a beautiful canopy of trees, and



well...this attracted me to the town. It's also a compact, little town...with everything necessary and everything is close...it has everything necessary --and a university as well!

J: Well, for me, it was basically work. I came to work in Riverview, and to better my situation...that one doesn't have in Mexico. And the closest town is Morris.

B: It was more of an economic decision---in the country. All that was left was to leave and come work in Minnesota. I first arrived in St. Cloud. Afterwards, there was an offer to come work in Riverview --and so that's how I first learned of Morris.

C: And is more for you two, but how did you find out about the vacancy in Riverview?

B: Ok, well before coming here, to Minnesota, I was working in Vancouver, Canada. Thanks to Mexico, I am a veterinarian and a friend had offered me a job in California, where he had been working. He had told me that I'd be better off going there, but the company couldn't acquire the necessary documents to come, because they were in economic problems, I don't know. So then, speaking with my professors, one was telling me that I should go, another that no. And so, because of the economic situation of my country, I accepted the professor's offer, and that's how I learned of Riverview.

C: A professor in Mexico?

B: Yes, a professor in Mexico.

J: I'm a mechanical engineer and before, I worked in Japanese company, in Mexico. And I heard about Riverview via a friend who had come to work for them. And well...because of the situation, because of the low pay, it was better to come here and take advantage of the ability to learn the language. Because it really helps my field, English is essential --it betters one. We also have the opportunity to work on "Digestores" --that the dairy is developing. And with me, when I was in college, it was something that I was developing in the thesis of the college, so, I was happy to be able to learn a little more concerning this topic.

C: In relation to your training, major, education, specialization etc., how do you see job availability in your hometowns/countries?

N: Hah, Hah, for me, this question is very difficult because I've been here nearly 45 years. So, I don't really belong to my country. My nation is here. If I had an idea, we would be talking with my wife but...I am about to retire, and not to work... to visit my country, of which I know nothing.

J: Yeah...for me, there was job availability. But it is a little...with the demand in Mexico, labor is very inexpensive in Mexico...and so foreign companies take advantage of the situation. And

so, it isn't very fortunate for us in that sense, but, yes, there were opportunities. Also, the experience gained here helps to better oneself in Mexico.

B: In my opinion, Mexico has a high quality of professionals, but they pay them very little.

C: So, how do you view job availability here in Morris, or in Minnesota? With respect to your profession?

N: I have my own company. So...this doesn't really affect me. No ...no...I'm not looking for any work here in Morris. But there is, there is work if one wanted to work for a company -- because I have seen offers, but I don't look because I have my own company.

J: With us, we are limited because we are working with the company, and it's the company that brought us and so...we can't really ---we have our documents thanks to the company. Other job opportunities could exist, for sure there are, but this doesn't really cross my mind --to remove myself from the very connection that gave me my documents.

B: From what I know, there are better offers. But the sacrifice is that I would end up without documents.

C: This question is a little different, but on a scale of 1 to 10, 10 being the most difficult, how difficult has your moving or transition to Morris been? or the area? and what were some of the difficulties that you encountered?

N: No....I didn't have any problems. I have my own truck, and so I had no problems moving...no...

J: In my case, it's not been very difficult. I'd give it a 4 or 5. Because I've become accustomed to being away from home. So the most difficult part was getting familiar with the customs, getting to know the way of life here, learning the mentalities of a people that is very different from Mexico's. It's the most difficult, moving from one region of Mexico to another, this as well is difficult. But the act of moving here was not difficult.

B: For me, I think it was easy. But for my family, I think it was difficult. Given that since childhood, we were accustomed to breakfast, lunch, and dinner together as a family. To leave my children...I'm always moving myself around, always looking out for the well-being of my family. I always thought, that in countries like this one, more developed, many say that they give you much. But for me, they take a lot away. Being here, one misses birthdays, I was here when I lost my grandpa...for being here, I was never able to reach out and hold his hand. One loses much.

C: And this is...one more time, changing the topic --what establishments or services do you use with the most frequency. For example, the auto dealership, gas stations, bank? etc..

N: Ah, Ok...well, there were 2 supermarkets, but we lost one unfortunately. Among the gas stations, I like the BP. I used to go to Casey's, but I had a problem there, for being Hispanic...so this motivates me to boycott that one ---personally. Hmm.. others? I use Riverwood bank, and I also use Bank of the West. The white store --the white house ---I frequent it --it has good prices, and quite bit of variety. La Tienda, for products ---good things. Ungers, for furniture, for the facility that they can come and install furniture. We also have to support the town in which we live. The Meadowland Market , ha, ha --where my wife purchases very cheap products.

J: In my case, my main expense is food. Pizza hut, pizza ranch, the McDonalds, DQ, and Willy's ---but I don't go there very often. I prefer to go to Willmar --or a Walmart. The Mexican store as well, the bank, Riverwood --that's the only one I use. The gas stations...I don't even remember the names --the Cenex. Very few times the Pamida. But concerning food, I prefer the Walmart --and that is in Willmar, Alexandria or Sauk Centre.

B: Here services? I never really notice...the BP, the Riverwood bank, and a insurance agency here...nothing else.

C: What programs or activities have helped you so that your transition occurred with the least amount of complications?

J: Well, I'm not sure what you're getting at with the question, essentially, the presence of the university ---I don't know to what you're referring.

C: Yeah... could you elaborate a little more concerning that?

J: Well, the classes that the university offers, the support that the high school offers, I don't know if it forms a part of the university--but the sporting events...with that, one can connect more with the community, but more than that,...no.

N: Yes...the only one that I've seen are the events like the Cinco de Mayo --that try to invite the entire town. And with this last one...it was lacking publicity. No...no...there wasn't any. More people would have come -- a better mix of people. The only ones who attended were Hispanics. In the past, I used to see many Anglos --Americans that went, because the message got out --it was received by the Americans via radio, bulletins, newspaper. This is the only one that I know of that helps...other than that, the church that I attend is the Free Evangelical --and it tries to unite the Hispanics with the Americans. It's the Hispanic misery [ministry] that unites us Hispanics, and many have come from other towns--the pastors have brought Hispanics to create this community.

C: Ok, and we already touched a bit on this, but if you feel comfortable answering this question, what events have you attended in the community? For example, you told me that you

played in the soccer league or religious events, but have you attended the Mesa de conversacion? or the GED classes or other festive events?

B: Well...the fair that we have here in Morris. And the English classes...but no...there isn't much else that I participate in.

N: Ha, ha ,the fair.

C: The summer fair?

N: Yes, the town's fair. There aren't many...

C: We have to provide more then. And of the programs offered by the university or the community, which have served you the most? What have you enjoyed the most? Or which have you used with the most frequency?

J: In my case, it would be the English classes, sporting events, the thing is, one tries to come here but, sometimes it is difficult with the situation that we have in every one of the dairies --- we don't really get off of work at an established time. Your starting time is well established, but I don't even have that established, I could be working until 5 or 6 in the morning or at any hour because the machines do not advise you when they are about to break down. So, it is complicated not having an established schedule. But the hours that the university has established help make it a little easier to attend. Yes...I have noticed this.

N: We also have this problem. We are trying to establish a nightly service schedule. This is a little difficult, we raise it, we lower it. We try to provide our service especially for those that work out there, the majority work out there. But their schedules change frequently --their shifts change ---they change constantly.

C: Could you tell me a little more about the obstacles that you have encountered? I know that the schedule and times are one...

B: I think that a better point would be the problem of transportation. That...hmm...I don't know. Basically, time and traveling.

J and B: Transport and Time.

J: Many don't have a license for a car---but the company does help us get licenses.

B: but the other issue is then to have a car!

J: Depends on the circumstances...

N: ...and the English?

B: I think that in my case, I don't know very much English, but I think that I'm good at pretending to understand. Hahahah

J: In my case as well...we come with a little English, but...it is an obstacle for the majority of the workers in Riverview; because they don't speak English, we help each other --those than can speak pair up with those who cannot...but essentially, 100% of the workers do not speak English. The lack of English is limiting. Sometimes, when some people take their day off to rest, they prefer to remain in the dairy than go out to town without someone who can speak English. They're afraid to go out to an event or to go shopping.

N: Yes...I have seen this...fortunately for them, unfortunately for me...because I am hurt, I am replacing, he had to have been in the town for a year or more. So, he could have helped out --being bilingual --so he could have offered me...help with translation. By chance that the voice runs very quickly ---so that every telephone call I received said "I need, I need, I need" and I was involving myself constantly in translation. I was also taking many people to the cities or something---to do taxes. It depends, They don't like to go out, they're not familiar --to lose themselves. So, every time, more and more, the voice travels and now it's as if I might change jobs. --I'm not going to stay here working a bilingual, and transport --as they say--transporting them to different sites. But there is a problem --and that is an obstacle.

C: And you had told me that you two were in ESL classes? Have they helped you better your English?

B: For me, yes...I think that it has helped me to gain a little more confidence...for me it is difficult to speak it, but for the most part, when someone talks to me in English, I can understand it. But expressing myself, it is very complicated...but it has helped me very much.

J: In my case, well, it's very similar to B. Yes, it has helped me very much, I understand it when it is spoken. I try to act as if I understand --in my case it has helped me very much because in my area, I have more contact with the Americans of the company. Of course, being a mechanic --there are many technical terms that I already knew...but there were many things that I didn't understand ---colloquialisms---things that I have learned here, in the University, so that has helped me. Because, one can go out a lot and still not learn the colloquialisms. But here in the university, one can learn such things --and then afterwards, one can hear these things being said at work ---with the American workers, or in the stores. And that is something that helps one to understand a little more.

C: So, what types of changes would you like to see to better your experiences with these classes? Something that would help you out more?

N: Well, I can tell you, on the part of my wife, who has gone to the classes a few times. She says that she would like to see more conversation. Because ---it is the most necessary, to be able to converse. Or rather, English is a language in which one needs to teach how to move the

mouth and how to position the tongue...because with Spanish, it is very different. He who moves his mouth the least, is a finer person. In English it's completely contrary, MOVE YOUR MOUTH MORE!! So, we have to teach them how to move their mouths correctly so that the phrase comes out right. For example, the TH, the TH is always said like a D...but it not a D, nah...so, I think that with this, when one cannot correctly pronounce, they become frustrated...so the pronunciation is the most important.

J: I think that you are correct with the conversation ---with the practice of English in the conversation. Because the grammar is great and all...but actually being here, it helps you more that you actually speak it- --that you understand it. Not that you know what is the verb, the subject, the predicate, the complement, ---if it is a preposition. By actually speaking it, people become accustomed...and if you're going to begin practicing, it is easier. It's easier to do this first. The grammar enters in afterwards. The grammar is more like a compliment, but here if there were more practice, it would be better.

C: And until now, which are and which have been your experiences with the programs offered by the university for example, I don't know if you've participated in Jane Addams or Lazos?

N: Hmmm, I don't know if I've participated in events like that.

C: You have participated in the festive events.

N: Ah, yes. Yes...in the festive events. I also have participated with the soccer matches that were established by a student here...

C: Yuri?

N: Yuri! Mmm a Russian. Yes...excellent.

C: A Russian that speaks Spanish.

N: Yes, that was a very good event, and it helped very much. I think that we got to know each other much more through those programs. These programs really united the town.

B: Probably, what I've seen of the events offered by the university is that they are creating more unity among Latinos, but they are lacking participation on part of the Americans. An example would be the Lazos dinner --we were all Hispanics, and the majority of us work in the dairies. For example, I remember when I accompanied J to the soccer league, we were all workers from the dairies. I see that we are creating our own little community and that we are not entering their community, rather, the communities are separated --we are creating our own little community.

N: Yes...it was something...Unfortunately, Yuri was offered a good job offer in Boston, and so he left us. But he wanted --something that we wanted--which was to create teams that included other people from the community --not just Hispanics.

J: I think that the force of this movement is more on the part of the university than the community --the people that already live here. It is more a force brought on by you guys, the students, rather than from the established community in Morris --or the state of Minnesota.

N: Because, it would be good if for example they were to take -- the university has much influence...that the university communicated more with the established community--so that they are motivated to create events that could include everyone. I think that the fair is an event that includes everyone. But there, I see little groups...everyone is in little groups, so it also depends on us ---we also have to dive in and mix ourselves around.

B: I think that sometimes you're afraid to mingle and mix about ---in the part where I was, in St. Cloud, I felt a lot of racism. And I went to a lake nearby, and also felt a lot of racism...and when I was in Vancouver, it was totally different. It's a multicultural city. Everyone would be doing exercises in the street, running, everyone would say "Hello! How are you doing, buddy? What's up?" It was very different. I felt very safe and comfortable in that part of Canada. I really came here because I was working in a job that didn't coincide with what I had studied. But if I had found a job in my field, I would have stayed there. I would be there now. For example, with the boss --when I was there, he came and visited me, when I was still in Mexico. And he always held me in high esteem. You can feel it when a people appreciate you and values you for what you are. For example, I remember when I arrived, my boss asked me, "What religion do you practice?" I said I was Catholic, he dropped me off at my apartment, and he told me, "Look, here is the Catholic church --you're not going to work Saturdays or Sundays. Sunday, I will pay you, because I want you to go to church. He bought me a bike so I could maneuver myself. With the people over there, everyone is trying to help you. You could walk about, and you always felt safe. It was very different. And here, I noted racism. It's over there in California as well, but for me, California is a little Mexico. But all the same, here and there, I've noticed racism. I don't know if you guys have felt it or not?

N: Well, I haven't...because it also depends on the person, you know. On the outside and on the inside ---I'm the boss! Understand? I no, no, no,...there are some things that we do, and as a result we are partly to blame. Because, there is a saying that goes "..."

B: It's happened to me, pardon me, when I arrived here, I came in through Chicago, and immigration came up to me and said "Huh? How is that you're coming up to work here? You can't really speak English very well, and I said, " they are bringing me up here to speak to the cows in English!" So, I started off with this bad connection ---these are the people that I don't like...that try to humiliate me. So when I responded, the tension rose quite a bit. And I had to

let him search through my suitcase. I couldn't move forward with my suitcase. I could feel bad vibrations.

N: Ok, but what I'm saying is this, ok? and this is very period-like, "When in Rome, do as the Romans do" that's how it is. You need to know we that we Hispanics want to implant our things here. And that is a grave error, and you pay for it, you pay for it, you pay for it, and I pay for it. Because of a few ---I'm talking about everyone. So, whose fault is it? Because I'm not going to take my truck out of the garage, blare my music and sit around throwing back beers! Then what? Who's looking for what? I'm completely right here...you see all their lawns nicely cut and taken care of, and I have my trees and I kept them in harmony with the branches. But then one day a storm came and wrecked everything. The branches were lying around there for several months until the city sent me a letter saying, "Eh! What are you going to do with all those branches? Do you need help? We can clean it up for you, but we're going to have to charge you." Understand? So thanks to God, I cleaned everything up with some friends --just yesterday. I cleaned everything. Why? Because I have to respect my neighbor. We also have a share of the blame.

J: You are completely right. I think that sometimes the lack of integration comes from us as well. But, if the ability to integrate oneself isn't there, you can't do it. For example, with the case you just mentioned, I put the branches...you didn't know...you didn't know if really was legal or it were something that was frowned upon by the people --why? Because it's not clear or well known. The customs are not well known. It's something that we ought to try to learn, no? But it is easier if you are integrating yourself in the community. I see that I am the only one that is doing something more, then I can say, it is not I, it's more them. But if I am always separated --then no, it isn't as much their fault.

N: We have to involve ourselves in the community, understand? And what's up is that we have to teach them that we are people.

J: I have seen in other places, that there are people that being Mexican, Colombian and they feel more at home in the US than the Americans. If you see a Latino, and you tell him, "Ah, don't do that, don't do it!" And the American doesn't tell you. Yes, the countryman or the Hispano will tell you. "It's because it is affecting me." But you are living an integration of persons. Sometimes, when the American walks past, and sees that you're doing something wrong, there is no problem! Afterwards, he calls the police...and they'll fix it. I've seen this same Latino people or from whatever country, get a good grasp on the customs, they try to get to know the other people, the customs stay with them. If you don't support it, no! Let's make a scene! On the contrary, it's wrong what you're doing. But most of the time, the American, and I'm talking about some, not all, say's there's no problem. Then they call the police to take them away. And the solution...



C: So, then from what I understand is that help is needed from both sides. It's not solely for the Hispanos nor the solely for the Americans to resolve. It has to be both...

B: It is important that we get to know them and that they get to know us. Here they know us as just some workhands...

N: No...we need to remove this mentality.

B: I believe that little by little, and I'm telling you this because in my case I have worked with doctors --married and everything. After the 7th visit have you remembered this animal? And if it appears sick, they negate the reason...no, no, they doubt me...And then they ask, eh, what's up? From what I've seen, those that live here, they think that they are the only ones that do what they do. In my case, if I detect an animal as sick, they say, "Oh no, it's nothing." I say, it has this, it has that...and they say, "No, no, it's doesn't have anything." Until the animal is dead --then they say..."Oh, I guess we were wrong." But they never give you credit for the diagnosis. And there is one in particular that I always...he knows me. In this respect I always am ready to fight, because no matter what I do, it is never the right thing. They say and think that they are always right.

N: This is what puts us in bad light. Because they are not doing the correct thing. There is a correct thing and an incorrect one. And we all know which is correct and which is incorrect.

B: For example, in my case, If I'm doing something wrong at work ---why do have me?! If you think things should function the way you say they should, try it out! Test it! Show it! They always say 'no.' Well...then why do you have me in the position that I'm in? Why?

N: I was going to say a few things ---in the small towns, everyone knows everyone. In the town where I lived before --not this one, a different one, all the families knew each other. But unfortunately, some families arrived --and you could say they were Hispanic. And unfortunately, robberies began happening. Things started disappearing --from garages--from all over. This family left, and the town calmed down. The robberies stopped and everything. It's obvious what happened? Understand? Another thing is that I wanted to rent a house. I am Hispanic...No...no they would not lease a house to me. Why? "They destroy the houses! They return them to me, and I lose more money repairing them --when they leave, they leave owing me money!" Give me the opportunity! I am not that family. So, what I see is that we have the blame ourselves. So, the Hispano is held in poor regard.

J: I feel like the job belongs to both parts. In the area that I am, it is very different. They've seen that the work hands--the Hispanos-- that we are maintaining the business --we Mexicans. They've seen that we help out a lot. So, they take with them a lot of opinions about us. They don't say, you're doing this wrong! They try to give compliments. The management team at Riverview, between those that are Americans, know to work with us. It is a good team. So more or less, because of the type of work, we are always together. We solve the same

problems that other dairies are facing and solving. And they are seeing this...they are working. And the this team's work between us both has made it so that in my area is there is more trust in saying I am doing something wrong --you are Ok, you are not Ok. I was wrong, but I'm good now. Yes, there is a growth in that to which you referred --that we share the blame. But of course, it's like all things, it's hard to know how we are seen. It's hard to say...

N: In another respect, concerning work, I tell you that we are hardest workers out there --los Latinos. I think that there are jobs that we cannot do. And there are some that we cannot do. I know this. I have tried...being Latino, I cannot. Ha,ha, you know? And if one can, I will admire him. I will admire his performance and the focus that he has.

B: It's exactly what we were just talking about earlier. For example, when have you seen an American work 12 hours, and when he's eating his lunch, and that doesn't has 10 minutes to talk about his woes---this happened, that happened! And then he's done eating, and is the first to return to work? When have you seen this? When have you seen him not take his coffee-break, sitting around the table.

N: No! That's why I was asking!

B: Where...where is the part, Ok! We are drunks, we are so and so...but where is the part when we are working 12 hours and you don't rest more than 1 day in the week, when you are tired--in their case, they leave at 6 in the afternoon, they get up at 6 in the morning. And they're tired. And at 3 in the morning something happens --get up! You're busy here.

J: I understand how ---with respect to the question. I think that it is a greater push from the Americans and once they see this push ---our support. For example, I don't know if in your case, you've been to other Hispanic countries, I think that, yes, you are going to feel that there are people that don't treat you well, but you feel that for the most part, they try to engage you in the society. It is well noticed. If they see you, "Ay, the Americans" and I try to remove this, but try to admit you to the society. They don't say no...rather, the society tries to incorporate me. In any Latin American country, this is what I think that happens. Any foreigner might arrive, you try to invite him --come on! Let's do this! You're going to see that some people are bad --but they're few. But the majority of people want to join the society.

B: If you show respect, they extend a hand. The Hispano is like that. It doesn't matter what nationality you are. No....in exchange...if you've noticed --if you go to the beaches of Rosarito, in Mexico, many Americans, young, go out to get wasted, to go out searching for drugs, over there ---what image are they giving? And when you come here, they see you, "Ay, drunkard Mexicans!" and I say, "And when you come to my country to do what you cannot here? Who are you? Who are you? Why? Why?" When you are here, they give you certain look...but when you go, "This is what the Mexicans do and they do it like this." For example, this same

Mexican or Hispanic culture lives for the family. I've noticed that the Americans...live for themselves. They don't have this unity.

N: Nahh, except in War.

J & B: Ahh...

N: There is a tremendous union. There, the union is very strong, in the military. You ought to do that! Join the army! Because in the army we unite, we all unite. Because, you know, of the necessity to survive.

B: There, you weren't a Hispanic.

C: This is a whole other issue. Continuing with the topic that we on, these are the final comments. Over your time in Morris...how have the offered services changed during your time here? We're going to have some different experiences here...but how have the services that we offer changed since you arrived?

N: Although I have not used it, I have heard that university is doing a lot to help the Hispano. It's doing many great things. Communicating --- I think it's all very good...to help the Hispano. To maneuver [speak] English, especially, no?

J: Yeah, I have seen this because when I arrived, the only persons were Yuri, Robert, and the professor Windy...so then, there was a little...I know that there were ESL classes at the university or something like that. Since that time, it's been nearly 2 years, yes, there is much better diffusion. From what I've seen in the classes is that they have become much better. For example, now they have the Jane Addams. Sometimes, I cannot go, but it helps a lot in that it has more conversation. So, I have seen that there is more integration from the university --that they want to help us.. Concerning the classes, I feel like they are stuck in the same line ---of wanting to teach purely grammar, grammar, grammar as if we were at an elementary school level. I would to see something more focused on "How the Latino communicates in English" not so much "How the Latino learns like a student in the university or high school."

B: Reforming the question, how can the Hispano learns the English much faster.

J: Not that the Hispano learns the grammar, that he/she learns to hear it and communicate it. This is what I think they could change a little.

B: I think that it has gotten a lot better. That you students are creating things instead of eliminating. You are creating more. Yes, it looks much better in certain aspects ---ESL especially. Yes...they are trying to make it so we learn faster, but the bigger question, I think, is how to focus on 'understanding more easily.'

N: The simple act of us being here, doing this, is a test that the interest is more 'how can we help' ---by searching for a solution of how to better communicate.

C: In your opinion, how has the community of Morris changed, the local community since you arrived?

N: I think that I have...I have seen much interest in that the Anglo-Americans are trying to learn Spanish to be able to communicate. And they like it! It's amazing that they are trying to learn Spanish in order to communicate. And they remember things from classes in high school. They try to say, "Hola!" they converse, and I see that they wish to learn Spanish to be able to communicate --and also to help, for example, my wife said to me one day, "Wow! I can communicate with her" you know? Because my wife is learning English. So they help her, and she feels better, more free. Before she couldn't really speak English and she would get frustrated. But now she can speak and she has more confidence, she is happier, and can go to do different errands --go to the bank, and the beauty salon, too. I see more interest on their part.

J: I also see a great advance in what the sir says. There are more Americans learning Spanish. It's something that is very respectable. Yes, you see more interest that they have to help you...but...

J: I feel like the community isn't what is inhibiting...it's more so the company.

B: What's happening is that--

J: Of wanting...there is the community and there is the company. I think that limiting factor is the company more so than the community.

B: I think that although we learn much English...personally, it's when we return to the dairy--

J: When we return to the dairy--

B: It is like a little Mexico.

J: Yes, it's a little Mexico.

B: Over there, we live in our culture.

N: This is what I was about to say...but it is the reality. It's that you only have but a day to --in a day, you have to finish everything.

B: Yes.

N: Wash clothes, go shopping, have fun, so in one day, you really cannot involve yourselves in the community very much, no?

B: It's like he said. I go to Walmart. Why? Because it's cheaper than Willy's. So, I go over there. I go, and come back and time's up!

N: Time is up...Wow...

[...]

B: The problem with your church where you can't find a time to accommodate the workers.

N: Yes...we changed it to 7, and they work later, they can't attend. And we...we cannot change again -we've changed it 5 or 6 times now.

B: What's happening is that they extend a hand --like with us--we came to this reunion. But if a co-worker had needed to go to the Cities to get a passport, we would have had to change work days. One works, the other will rest. We have to change times to help each other out.

N: I wanted to do something a year ago or so... when I didn't really have anything to do --and well, I have to do something. So, I made some flyers, and I put them up around in La Tienda, a restaurant, and Willy's or something like that. They said, "I will take workers, Hispanos, and whoever, I will take you to the Mall of America --the cities, so that they might have some fun, so that they might leave the monotony of life. Understand? So that they might see other things...The stadium! events...understand? To plan things...I was promoting this for months... Nobody whatsoever called me...nobody contacted me. Understand? and it wasn't just that...I invited them to ski --other trips. There is so much to see, to know. And i think that for those that work such long hours ---that are in that monotony...ought to get out, to get to know other things. I've travelled around and I know what to do---it's something that I can offer them. But...I didn't even get one call! Not one call! Yes...they offer many things...I offer this...I offered it...and no one took advantage of it... I also said I would rent a van.. I contacted a dealer and was about to rent a van...and I have a car that fits 7. I thought, if I take 5, I'll give them a price, if I take 10, I'll give them a price, if 15 go...the more that go, the cheaper it is --to motivate them to invite each other. But there is clearly a problem...these guys can't even get out to get a passport!? They can't! Because they have to work --exchange days... and they simply don't have the time. It's a confusing schedule

[...]

B: There are many co-workers, who are married, and the ask, "For what reason do I not have my family?" If I come out of work really tired, very tired. And we go to the Cities, and well, in my case...for whatever reason I need to go, I take others with me, and I tell them, if you want to stop overnight, it's Ok.

N: Sleepy...

C: Ok...well, then what changes would you like to see in the community? --or in what the university and community can offer a recently arrived Hispano?

B: I think that there ought to be a little more transportation --between Minneapolis and here. And if there is, you couldn't find it very easily. I thought that in a country so developed as this one, you might have a better-developed transportation system. Nol [sic]...for example when I worked in Vancouver, I lived in a small town --think of it as Morris. And Hancock was where the metro station was. The metro ran between Hancock and Vancouver --it took some 40 minutes to arrive, but to drive, It would take you 2 hours. And it was very cheap --it cost me some 3 dollars. And your ticket lasted nearly 8 hours. ---for 8 hours--and only 3 dollars, the train took me to Vancouver. How is it that it is like that over there, and not here? There isn't even a transport for...I don't know—

N: Yes, there is a transport.

B: Yeah?

N: There is a bus, but you have to pay some 60 or 70 dollars for the round trip. But if you call in advance, you can get a trip for 5 dollars. I don't know exactly where it goes...I don't know...but it would be good if there were sufficient people that there interested ---to speak with the company, and accommodate a price.

C: Based on all your experiences that we have gone over, how would you classify your experience here in the community, in the university, and in your work-life?

J: Well...I...knowing certain things. This is a community and everything seems great. In the small amount of time that I have to come to town, to the university, I've had an excellent experience. [...]

N: I believe that it is very good that the university is offering this opportunity. Unfortunately, I haven't participated very much. But...knowing now...the necessity of these programs, I ought to participate more. I've participated a little with translation --for parents and relatives, with children --between teachers and parents in the school. Nothing else in the other areas...but it would be really good.

B: As J says...this mission of integration that the university and community promote--I like this...I like it a lot. In question to work...we have a great responsibility with our work. The things that you guys do motivate me. I want to bring my family here, and say I live in Morris. But then, I'm forgetting about work. Like with these days --in the Summer-- I would love to take my family out to the park...to walk around. I would really like to be connecting with more people in the community --with the people here.

N: I think that we ought to think about something... maybe you guys haven't quite thought about it...but if you bring your families here...they are indeed going to have all the benefits that the university offers. They're going to get involved...because they will... in a certain a part, it could be really beneficial.

B: In that aspect, I see it for example, that it could be...as we spoke earlier---very beneficial for us as it is for them. I see it as more beneficial for my children. That they, as small children might learn the language...I think that we are always searching for a better life.

N: Now, I'd like to ask you guys a similar question. If we were to remove the university... how would you feel?

B: Hmm...well firstly everything would be more boring...because we would spend all of our time over there, on the dairy. But in particular...I like Morris, as a city. It is a small town, and I like the idea of bringing my family to live here, everything is so calm. From the little that I hear, I don't hear police sirens very much...there aren't drunkards running around --or drug addicts...not like how it was when I was in California. They told me, let's go to California...my children are safer in Mexico than in California. That is why, in that sense, I really like this place. It is so much calmer. It is a good place to live.

[...]

C: Thinking of all the questions that we asked you, if you have anything else to say -anything to add?

B: No, I just want to thank you for showing interest in, well, getting to know our culture. That you permit and promote the idea that we are not just delinquents that pop up in the news every once and a while. That you promote the idea that we can offer a lot to the community, that we are good people. We don't want to be seen as just some another set of workhands. I think that that is what has been done for us in Morris. We've shown the community that we work --and that we work very well. But these things...that you guys invite us to soccer games and to ESL classes---they've made us feel important in the society --that you're taking us into account

N: I think that we must create this ideal community --understand, we are two very different cultures ok...we have a lot to contribute...we are not all bums! There are engineers, there are veterinarians --many well-prepared people...much of the time, there are teachers that simply do not have the language. The simple fact that someone can't speak English does not mean that he/she is ignorant! These are educated people. Unfortunately, they don't have the language to be able to work in their profession.

B: This is a good point because in my case, my wife is a licensed to practice law. For various reasons, she is not working in Mexico, and even although I might bring her up here --she still won't work. It really bothers me when someone looks at you over their shoulder ---they try to

dominate you --without even knowing you. For example, it's like saying, "oh don't do this, and they do it the same." I've always liked the idea of allowing someone to show you that they know what they're doing --that you get to know the person first--then judge. It's what is missing here...people here ought to know who and what we are...where we come from --I think that if we were bad people, we wouldn't have come from so far away, and work so hard to support our families back in Mexico.

N: Unfortunately, these are the types of bad stereotypes. So, we have to change that. If we could, it would help us so much... that they take notice...especially among us Latinos --that they realize that we are decent people. It's just that it only takes a few---

J: like everywhere...

B: But I think...that for example, between ourselves...we've created this type of people some way or another. For example, in the dairy, we divide each other --him yeah, and him no. Sometimes we say, "Eh! Let's go to the bar!" Ok! But all the guys say, "Ok, who's going to drive?" Ok, we are going to respect that he doesn't drink so that he can take us safely home." We try to unite ourselves as to not provoke ---there are a few times that someone drives home after drinking one or two----but these are well prepared individuals that are arriving. Everyone who arrives is professional. We've come to work, but I know many whose wives are engineers, teachers...

N: L.'s wife is a doctor.

B: She's a doctor, yeah. There is much quality in the people that arriving now. One time, I said, concerning the company, "I feel like the recent growth in the company is occurring because new, well-prepared people are coming to work." Being around people who are educated helps you to think in different ways. If they weren't prepared, they'd be asking, "Well? What does this machine do? And this one?" But the workers know--and they implement what they know. And now everything is better off. They ask a worker --"I need this fixed in so many hours," and the worker replies, "In 2 hours it'll be done" --I'll check this out, see what has been failing ---that is where the company has been growing. Why? Because well-prepared people are arriving.

N: The Hispano... if he doesn't know it, he invents it.

J: Ha, ha...

B: Yes, yes, yes...

J: I think that in this sense, thanks to the university---the idea that you guys have. Trying to help people understand...in this case, If we notice, Morris and the greater Latino population and the company Riverview [...], it would be really great to create an equilibrium between the



university, the community, and the company --and there are other companies that employ Latinos. If we don't create this equilibrium, this isn't going to go anywhere...although one might put a lot of effort, we can't really achieve anything.

B: Yes, there are a lot of good people arriving. They say that they've felt devalued, underappreciated, and right now, the community is small. ---I hope that the program is developed more. I think that this town has a lot of potential to grow. We can create a really great community here in Morris.

[...]

B: Ha, ha we have to work tomorrow...

C: Yes, this conversation has been very interesting. But you guys need to work...so, are you left with any final commentaries? And thus, we'll finish the conversation...

B: I just wanted to thank you guys for your interest. I hope this helps --that you guys can have something to show to the community --so they see what we really are...

N: SÍ SE PUEDE! SÍ SE PUEDE [YES, WE CAN! YES, WE CAN!]!! (laughs)

B: That we are good people--we are working. One day, a friend told me, "Hey! They are paying us, we have to put up with them" ---and another replies, "Look, *we* are the ones putting bread on *their tables*" ... and he's right!

N: It's something mutual --there has to be some kind of balance because if not...I respect you guys [...]

J: I want to thank you for the interest that is being shown before the society. Especially before the Latino people. Because, we have all seen that there are people from other countries that go to the ESL classes. They also go to other events. Thank you...you guys are doing such great work.

B: Also, you bring in a lot of interest with what you are doing --the desire to learn Spanish.

N: Now I'd like to pose a question to you guys...Ok? You in the university...the students...do you know us?? Do you know who we are?

B: What do think of us?

N: Yes, yes! (Laughing) I think that if the university were to get to know us deep down --I think that they also would greatly influence much of the rest of the community. They can speak for us..."if they know us ---these guys are like this...they think like this" so it's not going to help change the mentality because many are afraid. It's [just] as well. We need to change that image, that mentality. That we are good people.

C: Well...thank you very much everyone! We greatly appreciate your comments.

## **FOCUS GROUP #2**

J: I think that we could probably begin. Ok...well, good afternoon to all! Thank you very much for coming. My name is Jordan... and to begin, I would like to go around the room and have everyone introduce themselves and if you could please tell me your name, where you from, from what region of Mexico you come from --or Latin America --wherever it be...how many years you've been in Morris, in the area...and if you live with family members, alone, or with friends etc...

V: My name is V...I am from Mexico, from Michoacan... hmm, I've been living in Morris for about a year. I live with my husband and my daughter.

F: My name is F. I come from the state of Mexico. I've been living in Morris for about a year, and I live only with my wife and my daughter.

R: My name is R. I'm from the state of Guanajuato, Mexico. I've been living in Morris for 2 years, and I live in the company, on the Riverview dairy.

P: My name is P. I am from the country of Mexico, the state of Veracruz. I've been here for about 5 months. I live in the dairy's apartments. My intention is to bring my wife and children to live here in Morris.

Ro: My name is Ro...I am from Colombia --from the city of Medellin. I live with my husband and 2 sons...and it's been 4 and half years since we moved here.

D: My name is D.. I am from Veracruz, Mexico. I have been living here for about 5 months.

J: Very well, what type of pastimes do you enjoy here in Morris, during your free time? Or rather, what do you like to do in the community, in your free time?

R: Here in Morris, there are so many things to do --go to the library with the children --the Wednesday, in the mornings they read stories...there are important books, books to read in Spanish as well. The library is trying to get ahold of books for everyone. Hmm, go to the park, ride bicycle, there are many beautiful parks here that are good for walking...I really like being in the middle of nature --there are many activities to do, but these are the ones that I love most..

F: Well, particularly, with the family...we are very united...after working, I like to spend my time with them. When we are resting, we like to stroll about, or take care of errands together...another type of activities we did earlier, was to go fishing and to get to know the other parks that are around.

R: Well, right now...with the work that we have...[...]. We get out at 6 in the afternoon...from working...and there is nothing else to do...other than rest. But some of our activities would be to go swimming, play billiards with friends, we like to walk about the parks and the lakes...we also like to fish...or play soccer in the summer.

P: Ok...well in the short time that I've been here, I like to play soccer, go about the town, play soccer in the high school...I like to go to the different events that might be going on here in Morris --get to know other cities. This is what I do in my free time.

D: Ok...what I've done here is...get to know the library, go to the parks sometimes, go to the gym --the gym is a part of the university no?

J: Yes, a part of it is.

D: Hmm...what else? Basically this...getting to know this and...

J: Good...and how is that you first found out about this community? Coming from your countries and cities, how is that you first heard of Morris? How is that you arrived here?

F: Mainly for work...along with my family... when I arrived here I lived in a town called Wheaton, which is north of Morris. Prior to that, I had moved to another town near Sauk Center...and mainly for work is what I came for.

R: I had never really heard of it... I was about to move to the United States but to a different state. And this one...well no. It was also for work that I arrived here in Morris.

P: It was the same for me, also for work, through the company. Right now I live in the Rancho (the company's land)... but well, I hope to live here in town soon.

Ro: When I originally arrived here in the United States, I was in Miami Beach and I was living there for about two and a half years... and we moved so we could be with my husband's family and mine as well. We decided to come to Minnesota because my husband's family is from around here. We were already living in the cities, and afterward we were living in Wisconsin, for a few months. My husband acquired a job and that's why we're here in Morris now.

D: I did it for my husband. It was the same. He got a job out here...and I came.

J: With the same company?

D: Yes, the same company, Riverview Farms...

J: Well... is it financial or personal?

D: Financial

Ro: Well for me it was both an financial and personal.

P: Family related.

Ro: Yes, for me it was a decision based on family. Because when we were in Florida, we always had to... whenever vacation season rolled around it was always difficult deciding whether to return to Colombia or to come to Minnesota. And so we decided to go to Minnesota to be closer to my husband's family and so when vacation season came around it was easier to decide, we would go to Colombia. And obviously for work as well because it was a really great job offer... but in all reality, it was both.

R: I think it was really something financial, but I also think I have grown professionally, I have further developed the activities my job requires, so I think professionally, I have grown a bit more. That is why I came under contract with the company. I think it has given me two benefits at the same time

F: Well, me, for work and for family and to develop and grow as a person. And for my daughter...so she can have a second chance in this life. Aside from what exists in Mexico, she can have a better life here.

J: Very good...in relation to your training, level of education, profession, and specialty, how do you see the availability of jobs in your city of origin?

D: Where I come from there were no problems... I mean I was competing, but I had a very good job, it was a personal decision for my husband, but I didn't have any problems there.

F: For me...there are jobs in Mexico, it is competed, but due to the same financial situation when I lived primarily in the cities, one does not make ends meet with the money, just enough to pay the renter, etc... the majority of people, the ones that are married, the wives need to work alongside the husbands to be able to excel.

R: Well, from my point of view, there were also no problems...I was working for a federal worker in Mexico. The option for me to come here was to capitalize financially a bit faster. I am a newlywed...about one and a half years since I got married... and I don't have a house, I still don't have a house. And so I came here to capitalize on my earnings faster.

P: Well for me work, there in Mexico...it exists...there's lots and it's very competed...but in the same way, no matter how much you work it's never enough for the daily expenses. And if something irregular were to come up, some "extra", that's when everything gets really

complicated. I believe that being here will be of a great benefit in all of this, with a better financial situation, we believe we will have a more peaceful life.

Ro: In my case, my husband and I...well I decided to migrate to the United States with my husband. More than anything, I wanted to get to know his culture since he got to know my culture. And at the level of work, thank God—the careers I pursued and studied in, I never had a problem finding a job.

D: In my case it was a personal decision to come because out there I had the option to work, but for me it was personal because I wanted to be with my family. And so I quit and came. There is competition and bad wages, but there are also very good jobs—so it really depends if you're lucky.

J: How do you see the availability of jobs here in Minnesota, or in Morris?

R: Well...if we're going to compare Morris... this town is obviously much smaller... but we can speak like Hispanics... what I perceive is that there are jobs, but what we need, like the others, is to speak English. Just that and having some safety... we come here under contract, like men and women. And those that are not residents or without a visa, it would be impossible to attain a job. We are here because of the company. I don't know... I could probably go out and look for a job as an illegal—like 80% of the people who come here to your town.

D: What was the question? Sorry...

J: Oh, the question was: How do you see the availability of jobs here in Minnesota or in Morris?

Ro: Here in Morris it is divided into jobs for men and women. For men, it is very good, there is lots of work, but for women it is very bad. For the career I studied for it is good, there is a hospital and it was always very easy to obtain a job because the whole world gets sick. But...unfortunately this town is not big enough for the women to also have jobs. From what I see, there are lots of farms, and the jobs on farms are primarily for men. Nowadays they are also getting women, but the majority are men. So unfortunately for women, it is not favorable...yes...

D: In the case of the farms—which is my area, no. Most definitely no it is not possible because I have a family... their hours are much too long, 12 hours. Being a mother it is difficult... Also working there, you have to be watching the kids or childcare, due to climate... in the question of availability of jobs, I think they exist, because there are lots of farms, but I also think that there is a difference between Riverview and other companies... Also Wisconsin, which is a very big state in terms of milk production. There are options...there are options... and for being a small town, it has a lot of different employment venues, but there is a strong demand and many people are arriving. In other words, there are always going to be people getting here right? But I think the availability is good...for men, right?

F: Well yes, here Morris, it is small. In comparison to other towns which are closer to the center, in relation to jobs, they exist... but we must learn English, but when you get closer to the center of Minnesota, the opportunities grow. And that's in other areas not just working with animals, there can be industry and things like that. But if you're going based off of the size of

the town you find... you can't say there are lots of jobs if the town is small. It can't suffice, something small. If there are lots of jobs, there will be lots of people, but there is a capacity cap in the town, it's a question of population.

Ro: But despite it all, right now it's a small town and lots of immigrants are arriving for work, in other works, I believe that the demand for work is very big.

P: Exactly

Ro: For women, it's much harder for us, but for men, it is very good.

R: I think the same thing. That is the reason why I haven't brought my wife out here. I feel that financially, there will be no more opportunities. I'm here to save money. That was my main objective in coming here. So taking the decision to not bring my wife here was... well basically with the visa we have we can't do much more—we come with and for the company.

D: And the expenses are the same in dollars. My husband pays rent, the expenses...you come out how we say, "sales table." You live day by day... not much of a margin for saving. And it's a different level because it compares better. It obviously comes with tranquility, certain access that we have to the university, going to the gym, taking classes, the commodities. Well, my shirt was made in Mexico. The proportion of dollar income and the dollar expenses, not much is left to save...no and you barely come out that way. Short...

J: Good, good... in a scale from one to ten, ten being the most difficult, how has your transition to Morris, or the area, been and what were some of the difficulties that you have faced? If you could comment a bit on some of the difficulties...

F: Well, until now, because of the moving that I have gone through, I have met several people that have helped me. Thanks to them I haven't gone through anything too serious. With the fact that someone has lent me a helping hand in finding an apartment, and in some other situations, in general it has gone well.

R: Basically I have had no problems with adapting to the town. Last year the temperatures were a little drastic, and since I arrived in the wintertime...but I have been in snowy climates before... it wasn't too serious. The truth is that the Americans... me... from my point of view there is no racism. Very good.

P: The climate was a bit difficult in the beginning. Because yes, the winter, but aside from that, everything was good. The treatment I received from people on the streets, or in service places, very good, very attentive. And in that I don't have a car, the transportation between the town and the farm is the only complication that I have. Other than that... it was all good.

J: Ro?

Ro: Well...up until now, I have had no problems. I really enjoy living here in Morris. I enjoy my free time here... I am very happy. I have nothing negative to say.

D: I have had no problems. No...no...this is a personal question. And no...there are no problems. The people are very friendly and accessible/approachable.

J: What establishments or services did you use with the most frequency? For example, grocery stores, gas stations, etc... or which bank, auto agency...

D: The [Riverwood] bank...

R: The Mexican store [La Tienda]. And Riverview [Riverwood] Bank

P: Willy's... the cafeteria

R: Dairy Queen...McDonald's

Ro: I use nearly all services, except the Laundromat. Yes...all of them.

J: And do you guys have to buy all the food for the department?

P: Yes, that's what it's like. We have to contribute for the food shelf. Generally we go to a Walmart...and if we forget something, we go to Willy's or La Tienda.

F: We don't really go to McDonald's. Pizza places though, yes. Gas stations, few times, and the bank to withdraw money. And the stores, we primarily use them in emergencies. We usually go out and buy things to last us 15 days, or the week, and it's more convenient than buying here.

J: Yes, and speaking of the services, I would like to add a question, how do you see the ease in buying a house or taking out a loan or credit for a vehicle, etc. here in town?

F: Well, if we are legal, we bring our paperwork and they request an endorsement, that is all they need, and by that we start creating our record. And a house... I don't know, because we don't know how long we're going to live here.

Ro: Well, in my case, I believe it is like the majority of countries, depending on the type of visa that each person has, they have certain rights, some people have visas, specifically immigrants from Mexico. Depending on your type of visa you can buy a house. And I believe that in the banks, the treatment is the same, being immigrant or not, the only thing that matters to them is the money. But depending on what type of visa you have, you may be able to buy a house or not. I don't believe that there is any kind of discrimination, and the majority of people buy cars using bank loans. And yes, it just depends on the immigration laws.

D: Those that could buy a house, with their visa, they need an endorsement. And this is the big deal, if you don't have an endorsement, they're not going to give you the credit. As long as you follow the rules, right?

J: What programs or activities have helped you in your transition so it would occur with fewer complications?

D: Bettering my English...now I don't remember the name?

J: The English classes?

D: Yes! The English classes, those.

R: Me too... they have helped.

J: ESL?

R: Yes.

J: In what sense? Or something else?

P: For the public events.

J: Yes?

D: Like Jane Addams and Lazos.

J: They organized a dinner right?

Ro: That type of coexisting they do...the get-togethers they organize, sometimes they help the community identify, basically who we are. Because they see you, and they don't know who you are, and now they know you work and that you're not a bad person.

J: Yes, yes...the other day I was walking with a friend, and XXX recognized us.

Ro: Sorry, but can you repeat the question?

J: Oh! Yes, yes. What programs or activities have helped you in your transition so it would occur with fewer complications?

Ro: Oh ok. Well, I have experienced a lot, for example, in the public schools. There is a lot of help for mothers that have... that are first-time moms or that have young children. There are classes so the children have the appropriate development, and they help to teach how to better interact with your baby. This is a very big help that, thank god, I have used. And I have been able to learn a bit more about the culture, and I understand a little bit more how people interact with their children here in the United States, which is not my country. The fact that I have attended the dinners that the university or the community puts on has helped me a lot... the dinners that they offer once a month. Those dinners have helped me a lot because I have been able to meet more community members and people from the university. It has also helped me to go to the public library so my son can hear stories in English. And various other activities that are done here in Morris help people feel comfortable. There is something always going on either in the community or at the university and the public can attend. There are lots of events where lots of people attend. I think what we need most is people's disposition to attend the events. But the community and the Hispanics, or the immigrants in general, know the community of Morris... and the people make an effort to speak the little bit of English that they know, but that is because the people have a disposition and what to know more about Hispanics and especially for the Hispanics from Mexico—because they are the majority—I too, am a minority here. In other words, people want to know more about Mexican culture, and I believe that what we need most is our readiness to let ourselves be known. Every time there is an event scheduled, do all that is possible to attend.

P: That I am here, it is true, and being able to meet other families—Latino families and families that are well established here—because it is with them that I will find a future. In the same



manner, I attend event with this in mind, of getting to know more people instead of being boarded up in the farm.

D: I believe they offer English classes at the elementary school as well... not the same organization though. Nancy is not there, but Elizabeth is. There are lots of programs here, but it depends on what you get involved with. When I was about to have my baby, there was a program at the hospital and...what was it called? Well it was to get you ready for child labor and I was the only Latina there, they were all American... But it depends on what you get involved with, but since the community does have the means...

R: Exactly that... with the people that live here, they are kind of organized. Despite the fact that it is a small town, they organize very well. Like the lady said, they are interested and they want to know more about us...but in all sincerity, the culture that they offer us does not help us at all. We get much more involved at work and... basically there is not much intention.

J: Yes, yes I understand. Anything else to add?

F: Well, this doesn't just happen here; it will happen in any place that one goes. If you don't participate in the society in which you are in, they will not recognize you. You won't be able to ask for a favor if you do not identify yourself here.

J: If you have not made the effort...

F: Or if you have not done anything...say, "Oh I'm so and so" or even if they don't know you by name, your actions will identify you. The person that is just walking down the street but still waves at you—that simple act will identify you, because next time they see you, that person will say, "oh! That's the person that passed by running, on a bike, whatever, and said hi to me. I don't know their name, but they gave me a warm greeting," Simply with that they will know you, not just in Mexico, in any country you go to, you have to start by introducing yourself.

J: In your opinion, what positive aspects does the city of Morris offer for a newly arrived Hispanic?

F: For example, if you're from the cities, lots of peace and tranquility.

J: Yes...

F: A calm mentality, which you don't have in the city. Safety, and an opportunity to learn the language, because despite the fact that one is with others that speak Spanish, when you come into town—in other words, you come into the stores in town—you have to start talking, it is an obligation we have because we are introducing ourselves here. So then, the people that are here, they don't have the same obligation to go, they like it. We came here, we have the obligation to learn the proper language.

R: Yes... basically security. And yes...tranquility... I come from a small town, but I have lived nearly 70% of my life in the city. And there is lots of peace in this town, and more than anything, security that nearly no other place in this country has. You know how things are in Mexico right now and many people have adopted the idea of coming here, because of the security that the country currently offers. Another thing that the city of Morris has is the

culture. You can leave your car open, full of things or food and no one will steal your food... and your car will be right where you left it. I have done it many times. It is something you can't do in Mexico...it's the truth...

P: The toys, the bikes, out there they get lost, not here. They stay where you put them.

Ro: I believe that everyone has been clear. I think that we all have the same opinion about Morris. Oh, and when I arrive here nearly 4.5 years ago, there were already English classes. I really believe that the town wants people to learn their language, not only because it is their language but because it helps us, the adults, and the kids. For me, the fact that there is a bilingual preschool has been a big help. Because my son is going to the bilingual preschool and he really wants to learn Spanish. For me, that has no price, it fills me with joy to hear him speak three or four words in Spanish. I believe the community is making an effort, maybe the speed that we would all like, those of us that are here... but I believe the things that are still needed, they will be there... people are working hard towards it. And...

D: Respect... lots of respect... security, and I believe that a very important thing it has, that other small towns don't have, is the university. Because really, it makes things different in this town. It enriches it.

J: What events have you attended, and in what kinds of activities do you participate in here in the community, for example soccer league, Lazos, ESL, etc...

R: I only attend the English classes and Jane Addams. I think that's it.

P: I only went to the dinner event for the Monarch Butterfly... I've only gone once to the English classes... and so I obviously can't attend everything with them.

J: Of course.

Ro: But I try to go to all of the events that there are. And a very good source that tells what is going on in the town is the Chamber of Commerce page. There are always new articles as to what's happening in the town. If there are classes, concerts, or children's events...

D: I have participated in what was this year's Monarch Butterfly dinner. Last year it was the Cinco de Mayo, I have participated in the English classes and...

F: And we have participated a bit, sometimes in the English classes and Jane Addams. We have participated a few times in what is the church—which is offered by the parish here. And mainly, after working the majority of the day, one just wants to be with their family...that is what we have here, family.

J: Yes...

D: Oh! I also participated in the teleconference they did with the Monterrey Institute—that's where I met you!

J: Yes! Yes!

D: I was here at the university, yes...

J: Of the services offered by the city, the county and the university, which have been the most useful, and which do you use most frequently?

D: the hospital

P: Where we get our license

Ro, D, F: Ah yes, yes...

P: The insurance...how is it...what is it called?

R: Yes...but with frequency?

P: Well, one time in my life, but for everyone that arrives here, you have to go get your insurance, only from the state right? What else?

Ro: the county...

P: Oh yes, I don't know about the county, but what else...

F: For those of us that are here in Morris, I believe we use services—electricity, water...

D: Ha, ha...well yes... electricity, water, telephone—sometimes, the basics.

J: If you are in English as a second language classes, do you think it has improved your experience?

Ro: In my case, I would like it if you do summer classes, because it is a long time. And if you don't have the possibility of going, in the case of the men that work, and I think that in speaking so much Spanish like they do there, one forgets the little they have learned.

P: Yes...

Ro: And I believe it would be good if they gave classes in the summer. There, in my case, my professors are very good, they prepare their classes very well, they are always ready to teach class, and I have learned a lot. Personally, it has helped me more in that it helps me feel more comfortable with what I know—to speak with the people from the community. Yes... it has really helped me. When the classes first started, if we start comparing to how the classes are now, it's light years of difference...

D: Lots of difference.

Ro: And now days, there are lots of people providing support for the classes to be good. Before it was two or just one person that had to organize everything—a homogenous classroom... each one had a level, and although lots of us were in a lower level, each one has its level. I think that the classes are very good and that I have learned a lot...

R: I think that yes... yes, they are improving us... I believe that to add to the classes—and this I think is personal desire—but to eventually be talking with Americans, in English, like she had

mentioned, when we get out of work, we just speak Spanish, the little I have learned is forgotten, and you can learn lots in some classes... but then you don't practice it? And we do get a lot of grammar, and we do practice a bit, but we don't speak much, I think we need to start talking, and with Americans that speak Spanish, so when you say something wrong they can correct you. When you speak to an American who doesn't speak Spanish, you won't see anything.

J: Yes, yes...I understand.

R: And this is something that would help us in real life—to speak anywhere, on the streets or anywhere...

D: I apologize, but I have to leave.

J: Yes, yes, it is okay.

D: Thank you. Thank you everyone.

Everyone: Likewise, thank you.

J: Until now, what are and how have your experiences been with the programs and events offered by the university. I believe we already answered this question...but yes...if you have anything else to add? Any other comments?

F: The programs have been pleasant. They have provided the opportunity to get to know you all, although you are also not residents of this town. I believe you are also providing for...how you live here in Morris...yes...

D: All the services that the university offers, in a sense, benefit immigrants, adolescents, and the youth is always willing to listen to us, help us, and orientate us, etc... Like is the case with the language...English... well really, I am very happy...

J: And what else is your opinion in regards to the role the university plays?

Ro: here in Morris, the university plays a fundamental role. I believe that if it was not for university, it would be very difficult for me to live in Morris. The university gives life to all of us. When the young people leave during the summer, the truth is that I get sad, because the town is empty...empty...

P: Oh yes?!

(They all laugh)

Ro: Well, not literally...but yes! There is no life without the young people out and about on their bikes...

P: Running

(They all laugh)

Ro: For me, this gives life...going to the store and seeing them buy their stuff for the week... I don't know... the university, above all, the prestige it gives to Morris. Like, not just for the immigrants, but I believe that a lot of people that arrive from different cities, here in the U.S., don't have the same experience...in other words, if it were not for the university, this town would be dead. People would get here for work... people would get here for work, but a lot of people come to Morris because there is a university. Our kids are growing up seeing that there are young people here, that there is spirit, that there is a form of growing up, the university gives prestige to the town. The adolescents or the kids that see that there is a university and that want to go to a university to study... the truth is it would be something else. When I came to see if I would all of a sudden like the place—we came of course because of work—but we drove around town and there are so many empty streets, empty, empty and cold alleys, but then we saw that there was a university—I didn't know. We saw that it was something else. It is the difference. The university—there are concerts, dances, people come here from all over, there are conference... obviously the university people are building their career, but for us that have already studied, we are still growing intellectually, because we are reading, getting to know people from other places...so then, the university is key here.

F: Other interesting point is the interchanges you guys manage. I noticed there are international students...well... we interacted with them. Primarily, we are giving them a good image of how people from Latin America are and I believe that they will pass on those sentiments to their children. And then, a relationship... who says, that now that we are contributing to a relationship the U.S. has towards other countries... I think this will be good for the future, for the kids of the students that are here now, just for the simple fact of being in a different place.

Ro: Yes, what F says is totally true, because I am going to the preschool on Wednesdays, and there was a Chinese family, with two Chinese daughters, and well they are improving their English. They were barely learning and couldn't express themselves very well, and that they are showing interest in Mexico—they said, “there are a lot of people from Mexico here!” And they want to go to Mexico to learn...in other words, if it was not for the university, not as many people would come here...

F: They would come all of a sudden, but the relationship would be different.

Ro: Well...the cities are different. But Morris?! Because on the farms they don't bring people from other countries. Oh no...no... sorry but I made a mistake... I met a young man from Brazil. They are starting to come to work on the farms.

P: Yes? Doing what?

Ro: Corn, I think it was working with corn...

R: And now a lot of Puerto Ricans are starting to arrive...

Ro: Yes...but at least it's one culture...the Morris culture...

J: Throughout your residency here in Morris, how have the services offered by the community and/or the university changed towards Latinos? And for you, how has the town itself changed?

Ro: I believe that the community has changed a lot... yes I know... if you have gone to the Salvation Army, before I would get to the Salvation Army and they would have everything in English—the posters, etc. Now they have them in Spanish too. And a young man from Mexico came in and the girl working says, “Hola!” and I thought that was good. Because you can see that now people know that there are immigrants coming from Mexico. And so they are conscious that they must also learn Spanish so they can offer a better service to the community. Short words, but they are doing what is possible. I found a bulletin in Spanish, and it filled me with joy.

P: What is the Salvation Army?

Ro: Salvation Army is the second-hand store.

P: okay...

Ro: And so more people go and buy what they want or to look for something they need...

P: thank you...

Ro: At the hospital too, they have a bulletin in Spanish. When I first arrived here, there was none.

P: Oh, well another case is the exam to get your license. It is in Spanish.

Ro, R, J: Ah, yes...

F: I believe that I can say more of the changes that Morris has undergone, I see that work... or what has happened in the town for the bulletins to be in Spanish...

J: Hmmm...taking in consideration that these changes would help yourself as well as new immigrants in the future: what changes would you like to see happen in the community?

P: Me, as a person coming to a town from a city, I questioned customs, laws and rights—those I would like to know... I don't know. Everything that the town has to offer, and the rules I must follow to live in this town. It's like when you come into someone's house, you can do this, this and this and not this, this or that. Yes, because there are towns where laws are very well established. And you know, here in the US, lots of counties and states...they vary their...legal situations...as an immigrant I don't have any idea as to what I can and cannot do.

R: Yes... yes I agree with him. You don't know when you're going to make a mistake. You don't know if it's wrong...or maybe something...if you're going to get a ticket or...I don't know...

Ro: Sorry, can you repeat the question?

J: Yes, yes... Taking in consideration that these changes would help yourself as well as new immigrants in the future: what changes would you like to see happen in the community?

Ro: Oh yes... well I would really like if there were a way for the children that arrive here—immigrants, Hispanics, because we are the majority—that there was a way for them to maintain

their native language. Because many children will arrive here and will begin to lose the roots of their native language. It would be very good if we fostered the love that the children must have for their parent's language. Another change I would like to see is the ability... that for the next generation... that they have the ability to focus in what the Hispanic culture is, or Mexican culture. That those children, when they are growing up, they can feel proud of their roots. I would like it if that was something that could be done. Also, something else I was thinking about is, during the summer it would be good if they had some recreational activities because the kids get out of school and they don't have anything to do or they stay inside the house all day and watch TV. Or maybe in many homes, doing different activities, but it would be good if the kids took this time to better their Spanish—it would help them to express themselves better or to use more Spanish vocabulary—because they start speaking a lot. They are saying a phrase and they start and then say, "But how do you say this in Spanish?" it would help the kids to not lose their Spanish. I think that for me, it is the most important, that the kids don't lose their roots...of course they were born here, but their parents came from other places. That they don't lose their Spanish, I would like that very much if it could be done.

P: Well...now in my situation...something that we would like to see done would be on the topic of homes and apartments. Right now well, their bringing more and more people to work for the company. And the more then come that come, more people also want to bring their families. But where? If the students were not here, then it may be easier to find a place. Well, Morris is growing right? Each time more and more people are arriving. Yes, with the university it is hard...well right now there are three families arriving...three families...

Ro: And it is difficult finding...

P: Yes...it is very difficult to find. That's how it is...that's how it is. And this is just a farm among many. We don't know how many families are waiting to come. So then, this period is a bit complicated, we're hoping that now during summer vacation, there will be some houses emptying out or apartments....so we can rent.

R: Well... I believe that if there were more programs so that we could interact more with the Americans. It would be good to have more communication—it is something that is a benefit to us, even if it is just to do a social good—from our part. I would maybe begin some kind of social doing in order to practice my English...

Ro: Oh yes...that would be of much help...

P: But we must repress our Spanish

R: And if...we could do some kind of social doing, not all of the workers would do it, but they must stay. One time I came to the U.S. for two years. I lived in Colorado, and I thought I would never go back to the U.S. when I went to Denver... I never placed much importance on learning English, and this second time, I realized I was wrong. We always have to be learning new things. When will you be able to occupy yourself to learn the language?? And well...we can obtain a better job or we can better express ourselves knowing the language. In other ways, it's not possible... you limit your self-expression.

F: Well...a more ... more unified relationship, like they say. But it will also depend on the rest of them. Us, like the newly arrived that we are, if we want to become a part of this society, no matter how much one makes an effort for inviting others to programs, events, etc... if the person doesn't have the curiosity, or maybe they just don't want to, or maybe they can't because of work—but we do say in Mexico that there are a lot of excuses not to do something, maybe we just want to stay home and rest instead of going to such and such activity. Last year, for example, Jane Addams started with some 30...35...and we ended up with only 3. The same... those are the same reasons for which students get disillusioned. They get disillusioned in continuing this type of activity, for the others, we provoke them very enthused, but then afterward, depending on certain situations, we start diminishing in number with time...simply because they don't want to go. In relation to the language, it is good in any place to have two languages, how Rosa says...the children of people who speak Spanish should maintain it—but they must continue with English, because it is another way of growing... Something that we can do for our children...and more than that...to arrive.

Ro: For me, for example, it would be very good to provide more opportunities to get to know the Mexican culture, because really, I think people want to know...they want...they really like...people are fascinated with Mexico. They really like...what I have caught is, they like it a lot. I believe that a good way of doing it would be if there was the possibility of learning more...here in Morris there is a fair, in June or July, but at this fair all the companies, it's like a parade, everyone comes out with their car, or truck and they dance and sing, play musical instruments...

P: Like a carnival.

Ro: That! A carnival. It would be very good if the Hispanic community did something of the sort. So that people can see who we are—that we really do work hard, that we do want to learn English because then also this would be a good way of people recognizing us in that parade. Because I see a lot of people at that parade, but then why is the Hispanic community not represented? In something that the whole town is seeing, it would be good to have the Hispanic community present.

F: Well with that I believe—and here comes the excuse—one of the inconveniences is the hour or time schedule. Yes, primarily, the people that go to that parade go in the afternoon, like at 3 or 4. It ends like at 7 or 8. In that time lapse is when people are going in to work for the night shift, and the day shift is getting out. And so in that case, the ones that can attend are the wives or the kids. The men primarily are in that time lapse and so it is impossible to attend. They get there and then they don't see anything anymore.

Ro: Well, to be in the parades, we could get the men who have the day off together and so then they, who have a free day, they can go and show some support for the women—or anyone—the children. Go out for a walk, we don't have to do anything too extravagant just to show the community that we are here. We are not three or four. We are a group.

J: It seems to me that we are nearing the end. So I would like that if you have anything else to add, if you could say it, that would be good. Okay, and the last question is, based on your



experiences which we have talked about, how would you classify your experience with the community? Generally speaking?

F: I believe that not just here in Morris or the U.S. but in any country, there will be people who will not treat you the same. And so, there will be people who might be different. It has always existed. The same happens in Mexico, in the sense that you are not from there so they will treat you differently. And so then, I believe that this is part of the adaptation that takes place. And well, generally speaking...it has been well, pleasant.

R: Well, I believe that the community in general has behaved, in what is limited, all of the Americans have behaved very well with us the Hispanics. And I have nothing to say. I have had some small problems here and there, but that is with work, with other Hispanics... but with my bosses that are American, the owners, and with the community...I have nothing to say...about you all.

P: The same with me...I have nothing bad to say, only good things. Everything has been very pleasant, getting to interact with different people.

R: Yea, I've got nothing. No episodes, people are always available to collaborate, to explain to me, to calm any restlessness I may have. Now I see that some people have different experiences, the only thing I would like is, like we said about the laws. Lots of people make mistakes because they don't know the law. It would be very good if they gave them a number or something of the sort, that someone can call when something happens or someone that we can call, because some things have happened, and it would be good if there was someone that knew, and like the newly arrived here don't know anyone. Going to court alone is terrible, maybe without knowing the language and you wait for someone to translate...it would be good to have a number for when something happens, then you can't say, "well I didn't know." Especially for the men who are practically by themselves...the women are always better acquainted with the Americans, because they can ask them or any other things, or in the case of the men it would be good to have a number, for any help or restlessness that one may have with the law...

J: Yes, yes...I can see how that would cause some problems in that you are here with visas...and it can get very complicated...

P: Yes, yes...

J: And in committing an error, without its being anything too serious, the same, with police here... have you heard of any kind of problem with them, in respect to discrimination?

Participants: No, no....

R: Here in Morris no...the police hardly pulls you over unless you're speeding. But no, but if you're out in the middle of the night, past like 11, if they see you alone, they will pay attention to you, but they won't really ask you who you are or where you're going...

Ro: I have heard of a case of discrimination but did not live it. It was a young man, 21 year old, who went to go buy cigarettes and they asked him for an ID and the lady called the police and now he's in a bind. The person who told me about this said it was because of discrimination.

And he had an interpreter that didn't speak very well...and well...in some cases we don't want to help... and with all that knowledge I am an immigrant, and I don't know the laws very well, some things I know, some I don't. And I believe that lots of people have had problems due to the fact that they have to confront them alone. Looking for help, they can call the Mexican consulate, but they are not here in Morris. And so, someone that knows the law can help orientate them, to help the person feel more comfortable and not solve the problem. Many times the person thinks that the person is here to solve the problem, but they have to know that they are here to help find a solution, or maybe to explain why they are in the problem...

J: Well it seems that we can wrap up there...

(Silence)

All: Thank you, thank you, etc.

**APPENDIX:****CONSENT FORM:****CONSENT FORM / FORMULARIO DE ACUERDO****Community-Based Research Study of the Needs of Recent Latino Immigrants in West Central Minnesota*****Estudio sobre las necesidades de los inmigrantes latinos recién-llegados al centro-oeste de Minnesota***

You are invited to be in a research study of how well the Morris area is meeting the needs of immigrants from Mexico. You were selected as a possible participant because you responded to a public notice about this study. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

*Lo/La invitamos a usted a participar en un estudio que analizará si Morris cumple con las necesidades de los inmigrantes latinos. Lo/La seleccionamos a usted como posible participante porque usted respondió a la nota pública sobre este estudio. Le pedimos que lea este formulario y haga cualquier pregunta que tenga antes de dar su consentimiento para participar en este estudio.*

This study is being conducted by Stacey Parker Aronson and Windy González Roberts in collaboration with University of Minnesota, Morris' Center for Small Towns.

*Las investigadoras de este estudio son Stacey Parker Aronson y Windy González Roberts en colaboración con el Center for Small Towns de la Universidad de Minnesota, Morris.*

**Background Information / Información:**

The purpose of this study is to find out how well the Morris area is meeting the needs of Latino immigrants.

*El propósito de este estudio es determinar si la comunidad de Morris cumple con las necesidades de los inmigrantes latinos.*

**Procedures / Procedimientos:**

If you agree to be in this study, you will participate in a conversation of about two hours with other recent immigrants. You will be asked a series of questions and given the opportunity to

respond to each question. We will use your responses to write a report that can be shared with area institutions so that the community can better meet the needs of new immigrants. You should feel free to withdraw from the study at any time or to choose not to answer any particular question.

*Si usted decide participar en este estudio, participará en una conversación que durará aproximadamente dos horas junto con otros inmigrantes latinos recién llegados. Le haremos una serie de preguntas y le daremos la oportunidad de responder a cada pregunta. Usaremos sus respuestas para escribir un informe que se puede compartir con otras instituciones locales para que la comunidad pueda mejorar y cumplir con las necesidades de los nuevos inmigrantes latinos. Usted tiene el derecho de retirarse del estudio en cualquier momento o decidir no contestar una o más preguntas.*

### **Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study / *Riesgos y beneficios de participar en este estudio:***

The study has no specific risks. While we will aim for confidentiality (see section below), there may be a chance you could be identified, though we will do our best to leave out any identifying information. The results of the study will be shared with others in order to provide a better quality of life for present and future immigrants from Mexico.

*Este estudio no presenta ningún riesgo. Mientras intentamos mantener la confidencialidad, existe la posibilidad de que usted pueda ser indentificado(a), aunque haremos todo lo posible para omitir información que pueda identificarlo/la. Los resultados del estudio serán compartidos con otros con el fin de proveer una calidad de vida mejor para los inmigrantes latinos presentes y futuros.*

### **Compensation / *Remuneración:***

There is no compensation for participation in this study.

*Usted no será remunerado(a) por participar en este estudio.*

### **Confidentiality / *Confidencialidad:***

The records of this study will be kept private. We will present a report to area institutions that might be better able to serve current or future immigrants. Research records will be stored securely and only researchers will have access to the records. The tape recording will be used to ensure accuracy, but after the report is complete, the recording will be destroyed.

*Los datos de este estudio serán privados. Les presentaremos un informe a instituciones y grupos locales que puedan servirles a los inmigrantes latinos presentes o futuros. Guardaremos los datos de investigación y sólo los investigadores tendrán acceso a ellos. La grabación asegurará que las reouestas sean transcritas correctamente, pero después de que se termine el informe, la grabación será destruida.*

### **Voluntary Nature of the Study / Naturaleza voluntaria del estudio:**

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the University of Minnesota, Morris or UMM's Center for Small Towns. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

*Su participación es voluntaria. Su decisión de participar o no no afectará sus relaciones presentes o futuras con la Universidad de Minnesota, Morris o con el Center for Small Towns. Si usted decide participar en el estudio, usted tiene el derecho de retirarse del estudio en cualquier momento o decidir no contestar una o más preguntas.*

### **Contacts and Questions / Contacto y preguntas:**

The researchers conducting this study are Stacey Parker Aronson and Windy González Roberts. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact the researchers or community partners using the contact information below:

*Las investigadoras son Stacey Parker Aronson y Windy Gonxález Roberts. Si usted tiene preguntas, favor de ponerse en contacto con una de ellas usando la información a continuación:*

STACEY [aronsop@morris.umn.edu](mailto:aronsop@morris.umn.edu) / 320-589-6290

WINDY [wroberts@morris.umn.edu](mailto:wroberts@morris.umn.edu) / 320-589-6294

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s), **you are encouraged** to contact the Research Subjects' Advocate Line, D528 Mayo, 420 Delaware St. Southeast, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455; (612) 625-1650.

*Si tiene preguntas o preocupaciones sobre este estudio y quiere hablarle con alguien que no sea una de las investigadoras, favor de ponerse en contacto con Research Subjects' Advocate Line, D528 Mayo, 420 Delaware St. Southeast, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455; (612) 625-1650.*

**You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.**

***Le daremos a usted una copia de esta información.***

**Statement of Consent /Acuerdo:**

I have read the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

*He leído la información arriba. He hecho preguntas y he recibido respuestas. Yo doy mi consentimiento para participar en este estudio.*

Signature/Firma: \_\_\_\_\_ Date/Fecha: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Investigator/Firma de investigador(a): \_\_\_\_\_ Date/Fecha: \_\_\_\_\_